Life of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier

Foundress and First Superioress-General of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers

Translated from the French of the

Right Rev. Monsignor H. Pasquier

Domestic Prelate to His Holiness Leo XIII.
And Dean of the Catholic Faculty of Letters of Angers

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LIFE OF MOTHER MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA PELLETIER

HELIOG. DUJARDIN. IMP. CH. WITTMANN

LA R^DE MÈRE MARIE DE S^TE EUPHRASIE PELLETIER

Fondatrice et 1re Supérieure Générale
de la Congrégation de N. D. de Charité
du Bon Pasteur d'Angers

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OF THE CONGREGATION OF OUR LADY
OF CHARITY OF THE GOOD
SHEPHERD OF ANGERS

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DOMESTIC PRELATE TO HIS HOLINESS LEO XIII.
AND DEAN OF THE CATHOLIC FACULTY OF LETTERS OF ANGERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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PROTESTATION OF THE AUTHOR.

In submission to the decree of the Holy Inquisition of the year 1625, explained and confirmed by Urban VIII. in 1631 and 1634, I ask that all contained in this book be taken in a purely human sense, and that the titles of blessed or saint, the terms miracles, prophecy, or revelation, wherever occurring, be understood in the sense in which it is customary to use them when speaking simply on human authority, and not on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, or of the Holy Apostolic See, excepting only in such cases in which the same Holy See has pronounced judgment.

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PREFACE

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier, Foundress and first Superioress General of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd, died twenty-five years ago at Angers. The event was announced in some newspaper articles, and a few biographical notices appeared, giving more or less imperfect accounts of her successful work; after which, either from indifference, or, in some cases, from prejudice, all interest in her seemed to die out.

But, if apparently thus soon forgotten, the 110 monasteries which she had, in the course of thirty-eight years, founded and scattered over the globe, remained as standing witnesses of her great eminence of character and her remarkable merits; and as her work grew her fame spread, and she ceased to be forgotten. Her daughters in religion, moreover, lived in veneration of her name and memory; they cherished her utterances, which they preserved with loving care, as a lamp to guide their steps, setting her life before them as a pattern to be copied. Those among them who had been more closely associated with her could never speak of her without emotion.

In 1886, the second Superioress General, Mother Mary of St. Peter de Coudenhove, who for nine years had been closely associated with Mother Pelletier as Assistant-General, thought the time had come to make universally known that beautiful life which was the very foundation of the Congregation. "The providential mission intrusted to our Mother is strikingly manifested, no doubt, in the number of her foundations," said Mother de Coudenhove, "but her sanctity is known fully only to her daughters, for only they know with what admirable patience and heroic charity she bore contradictions throughout her whole life."

When Mother Mary of St. Peter de Coudenhove asked me to write Mother Pelletier's life, I sought opportunities of talking to those among the religious who had known her, and whose touching words of filial piety often reminded me of the chronicles in which the Sieur de Joinville recounts the edifying actions of his beloved master, St. Louis. I also read the "Annals" of the community, the "golden book," in which are registered all the more striking incidents of the great work done for souls by the Congregation. I read also, and with much edification, the numerous letters written by Mother Pelletier herself, and the records of her instructions kept by others. Her letters are very often nothing else than conversations from a distance with her daughters. I was constantly struck by the supernatural intention which was always the

Monastery General of the Good Shepherd, Angers.

motive of her actions and counsels. When dealing with her letters or utterances, I have often preferred to give the good Mother's very words rather than my own.

Having studied her work and her words, whether written or spoken, and having conversed with religious of the Good Shepherd and other persons who knew Mother Pelletier, it is my opinion that she was a woman of great natural talents, and of supernatural virtue in the heroic degree.

She was the disciple of the Venerable Father Eudes, whose writings she had studied, and with whose spirit of zeal for the conversion of sinners she was imbued, and she was raised up by the Providence of God in the nineteenth century to give to the houses of the Refuge, founded in the seventeenth, that impulse of expansion and fecundity, the germs of which exist in every Catholic work. She transformed the cloistered community of the Good Shepherd into a congregation, having provinces established in different countries, like the great religious orders of the Church.

The cause of her beatification has been instituted, induced by the fame of her heroic virtues, and, should the Church award to her the title of "Blessed," I hope that the deeds and words which I have in this book recorded in good faith and simplicity may have their share in throwing light upon her sanctity, and in edifying the reader as they have edified me.

I dedicate my work to the 200 Folds of the Good Shepherd, established in all parts of the world, and I trust it may be the means of winning many pious souls to become "Shepherdesses," to watch over and to save the sheep of God, and, in recompense for my labours, I claim from each "Shepherdess" a *Pater* and *Ave.*

INTRODUCTION

View of the Good Shepherd at Angers—Interior of the Convent—Mother Pelletier—Her work in the Nineteenth Century—The Vendéenne.

To the west of Angers, upon the right bank of the Maine, along the edge of fields bordering the river, stretches what looks like some large industrial colony, surrounded on every side by walls. Four or five blocks of irregular construction, separated from each other by courts and spacious gardens, form an imposing mass of buildings which, viewed from the opposite bank, recalls the great monastic cities of Egypt, where monks prayed and toiled, enclosed within walls beyond which they never passed. On the lower level stands the chapel, round which lies a quadrangle formed by four buildings connected by cloisters. North of this quadrangle are two houses, each large enough to hold several hundred people. Another building, which looks like a small convent, stands isolated from the rest among trees in one of the gardens, and, scattered over other gardens, are the school for little girls, the farm, and, still farther off,

the bakehouse. These various buildings and gardens all communicate with one another.

Connected with them by a tunnel, but on a higher level, and a finer building than any of the others, is a convent which, built of tufa, and standing in the full blaze of the southern sun, is of almost dazzling whiteness. This is the old Abbey of St. Nicholas, the most beautiful of the ancient abbeys of Angers, a *chef-d'œuvre* of the Benedictine architecture of the seventeenth century. Situated upon a slope, St. Nicholas rises above a long, narrow, sinuous sheet of water, the bed of which seems to have been hollowed out of the slate quarries.

On the north side, this sheet of water is shut in by a wild bit of land, covered with brushwood, broom, and fir trees, and looking as if no town, or even human habitation, could be near it, reminding one of some narrow Swiss valley. The view to the south is a pleasing contrast. Below are sunny fields, in summer carpeted with flowers, in winter converted into a great lake, bounded by encircling banks, and in autumn forming pastures where all the flocks of the neighbourhood congregate. Across the river Maine are low-lying rocks which border it, and upon which stands out in relief the Convent of the Baumette, with its terraces rising one above another, and its staircases cut out of the rock, and its small sixteenth century cloister. Behind this, again, the

horizon is defined by the white misty thread of the Loire, and the gentle slopes rising in uniform lines along its farther bank.

Both from the Good Shepherd and St. Nicholas, the view is lovely, and changes with every season, or, indeed, with every hour, as the sunlight falls upon different points of the landscape, and the ever-shifting clouds rising from the Loire, the Maine, and the rivulet called the Brionneau, thicken or disperse, varying their fantastic shadows on the hillsides.

In spring, when the sun rises, the religious of the Good Shepherd, from their cloisters and cells, see their gardens flooded with the sun's gentle rays, as, little by little, he mounts towards them above the old town of Angers, with its slate walls. They hear, too, the song of birds among the trees, and the whole atmosphere seems filled with life and youth, drawing the soul to the Divine Source of all the beauties of nature.

The evenings close in early, as the shadows stretch down from the hills to the west and fall upon the gardens, and, with the shadows, comes silence. As the rays of the departing sun fall upon the old town and castle of Angers, the courts and alleys of the great monastery become pervaded by a religious stillness to which meditation and pious recollection seem naturally to belong.

In autumn the impression is more austere: there

is a sense of religious melancholy. Fogs often spread over the fields which border the garden, and impart to them an idea of indefinite space. Nothing is heard but some distant sound which rises occasionally from the town. Leaves falling from the trees make a carpet flecked with green and yellow, and cover the path that leads to the calvary far within the enclosure. The white habits of the nuns as they move silently about at their work, or kneel to pray, stand out in clear outline against the wild uncultivated borders, and give life to the picture.

It is a congenial time and place for meditation in the Retreat, and the nuns who come and kneel down before the calvary seem to harmonise naturally with the impressions created by their surroundings, and even with the heaps of leaves fallen and dying. For them also the Cross overshadows all the joys and events great and small of their past lives, just as here it overshadows all these things in nature which are withering and dying around Calvary.

Above the great green door of the monastery, where so many poor girls have come to seek an asylum, is this inscription in large letters: "Monastery General of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers," and above the inscription a statue of our Divine Lord carrying a sheep on His shoulders. This door opens into a large vestibule, upon the walls of

which are written texts from the Holy Gospels in French, German, English, and Italian.

One feels immediately that this is a Catholic seminary, where missionaries speaking various tongues are prepared for work in different parts of the world. Inside the house, an interesting spectacle awaits us of combined prayer and work.

More than one thousand women, dressed in different costumes, are engaged in study, plain or fancy needlework, cooking, house-cleaning, gardening—here shoes are being made, there bread is mixed for others to bake, whilst some work the machine in which the wheat is ground into flour. It is the co-operation of all trades necessary in a well-organised town, and at the head of each a Sister in her white habit rules and directs.

In a separate building, surrounded by courts and gardens, two hundred girls, who have been snatched from the dangers of the world, and often from the depths of misery, live and work under a semi-religious rule, and order reigns everywhere. Some have reached this haven of peace through troubled waters, yet the faces all wear the happy look of souls restored to God, in whom the Christian life is being formed by the discipline of their labour.

They have a workroom where, with their needles, they earn their daily bread, keeping silence while their skilful fingers are busy. Sometimes they sing

a hymn, which breaks the silence and reminds them of the presence of God. The religious come and go, maintaining the spirit of order and obedience by their presence rather than by their commands. Here and there are to be seen certain chosen ones among the penitents, who, having been thoroughly proved, act as leaders, so to say, and who by their good example, become the guides and guardians of the younger girls. This section of the community is called the "Great Class," and there is no house of the Good Shepherd without it.

It is the field specially reserved for the zeal of religious of this Order, the field which our Lord has assigned to them to cultivate, and great care it needs to shield it from evil, to make it fruitful in virtue, and to bring to maturity the fruit of sanctification which grows there.

Next to the penitents, but in an isolated house, are the Magdalens, a separate community, wearing a brown serge habit, something like that of the Carmelites. Their house reminds one of the Sainte Baume, and their patron is St. Mary Magdalen. They divide the day between prayer and work. When they have worked for their daily bread they go to the chapel, to offer to God the homage of adoration and their mortifications in reparation for all the sins committed in the world.

A religious of the Good Shepherd presides over

this community, but her sway is so gentle that there seems to be no effort in obedience. This Community of Magdalens is to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd a foretaste upon earth of the reward which awaits them hereafter, and shows the wonderful efficacy of their work. It is a mystic garden where the most beautiful virtues of Carmel flourish.

In the central and quietest part of the monastery the Novitiate is placed, the seminary where youthful missionaries are trained in the religious life, and acquire under the influence of their rule those spiritual treasures which they will carry with them to other convents of the Order. Several times in the course of the year bands of young professed are sent out from the Novitiate to different parts of the globe.

The most indifferent visitor must be edified by the continual movement and silent activity in the monastery, and feel that here are being prepared and ripened great projects for the salvation of souls. The annals of the Congregation record that thousands of women have gone forth as missionaries from this convent, and that at the present moment 20,000 young girls are sheltered in different houses of the Order, and that since its foundation the children received and brought up by these nuns are reckoned by *millions*, whilst the number of foundations throughout the world is now nearly two hundred. These

souls in the cloister of the Good Shepherd. She had superior mental gifts and plenty of good sense, and the life of the convent satisfied her zeal. There she found the life of prayer united to a life devoted to the conversion of sinners. For forty years she sang the praises of God in harmony with the sisters, French, English, Irish, Italian, Spanish, with whom her vocation associated her, and for twenty-four years she upheld and governed the work of the Good Shepherd.

It was Mother Pelletier who, called by special grace, founded this vast monastery, who defended it with undaunted energy, and by her apostolic zeal developed it; and Mother de Coudenhove, in the same spirit, kept intact the inheritance handed down to her, and the same spirit is still the strength of the Institute.

The older religious, who knew Mother Pelletier, speak with veneration of her words and acts: "Our Mother did this, or spoke thus—she would have istened to this petition. She would have accepted this as a cross." The younger Sisters, fed upon the instructions of Mother Pelletier, some of which are written, others handed down verbally by the older Sisters, strive to make their own lives copies of the model she bequeathed.

And this zeal in endeavouring to acquire and imitate the virtues of their Mother Foundress exists alike

in all the houses of the Order, whether in America, Germany, Egypt, or Australia. Wherever there is a convent of the Good Shepherd, whether in Lisbon, Vienna, Munich, London, or Rome, there are religious dedicated to their sublime work, and when they pray to God to show them what they must do to touch the souls confided to their care, and bring them back to Him, they always recall the teaching and practices of Mother Pelletier that they may be faithful to their vocation, and save as many souls as possible.

It is the history of this revered Foundress which we propose to write.

Mother Pelletier holds a distinct place among the Christian women of this century who have been foundresses of charitable works for the relief of human misery.

Our philanthropic age admires the progress made in science; it approves and views with favour these innumerable institutions, excelling in comfort and splendour anything that preceded them.

All over France, congregations devoted to charitable works of every sort have taken root and spread. For every kind of infirmity a home is provided. Great ladies have become Sisters of Charity, and visit the houses of the poor and the hospitals, and dress wounds from the very sight of which nature would recoil.

Most of these charitable works, touching as they are, were founded, however, primarily for the relief

of physical suffering, for the old, the sick, and little children. But the needs of the soul were the object of Mme. Pelletier's zeal. The world makes light of the maladies of the soul, which it often ridicules rather than pities.

To discern the soul's wounds, to measure their depth, to have compassion for them, to enter upon the task of their cure, all this needs a Saint's pure discernment, a Saint's heroic love of Christ. It is the grand aim of the Church to war against sin, to heal all moral sores, to restore the soul to that health, beauty, and life which are the pledge and promise of life hereafter.

To heal the body, money and medicine are the chief necessaries, but to heal the soul there must be that daily emanation of virtue which is the fruit of sanctity; and such was the life to which Mme. Pelletier devoted herself.

The work of Father Eudes appeared to her singularly fitted for the purpose; and, impelled by her own zeal as well as encouraged by the results obtained in the houses of the Refuge, she added to the original scheme, and gave to it the Catholicity of an immense community with a Generalat and Cardinal Protector.

Into the folds thus built up, she gathered not only sheep once lost, but innocent little children, our Lord's lambs.

Zeal for souls and charity towards sinners are the

two characteristic features of the figure standing out most prominently in the "Good Shepherd" and in the group of French religious of the nineteenth century. Mother Pelletier's is a marked personality, on account of the courage she displayed in the face of opposition in founding the Community and the Generalat, although to her naturally peace-loving disposition the struggle must have been sustained at a painful cost.

She fought for the rights of her Community, claiming for it, in the name of justice, the holy liberty which the Church grants to her children, and appealing from the arbitrary practices of Gallicanism to the broad Canon Law of the Church, with its wise safeguards and prevision. Twenty years before the general return to the pure Catholic doctrine with regard to Papal authority, she successfully upheld it in the vast Institute she governed, edifying upright souls by demonstrating holy truths hidden under human conceptions. She showed that, under the government of the laws of the Church, liberty is guaranteed to each child of the Church, and that the rule of Peter is paternal, and therefore the security of the weak and humble. Mother Pelletier was one of the must useful and courageous champions raised up in this century to vindicate the rights of the Holy See. The simple directness of her nature and her Catholic instinct drew her to Rome, and Rome gave her work the

seal of its own unlimited universality and fecundity. She suffered for justice' sake, and she was rewarded in seeing the success of her Order.

To give Mother Pelletier her right place, she should be portrayed in the company of such religious as Mme. Barat, Mother Javouhey, and others. She had the clear-sighted vision which looks through earthly things and sees what lies beyond. Enamoured by the beauty and tenderness of the Divine Spouse, Whom she pitied in His suffering members, she went forth to rescue them, seeking out the poor and sick, and trampling down the obstruction skilfully reared by her enemies. Her direct and straightforward zeal baffled human calculations, and, not merely did she console the afflicted, but in the suffering she endured to maintain the rights of her Institute, she left an example of courage to all who prize spiritual freedom.

Rose Virginie Pelletier, in religion Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, Foundress and Superioress General of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Angers, belongs to that band of valiant women, who, in the beginning of this century, founded or restored religious houses in France, giving back to Holy Church many of the abodes of prayer and mercy which the Revolution seemed to have for ever destroyed.

Nowhere, during the half-century of the restoration of convents all over France, was there the same develop-

ment of zeal in religious foundations and vocations as in La Vendée and the Bocage.

The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. The soil of La Vendée, watered with the blood of obscure heroes, who died for their faith and inherited traditions, was ready for seed which, quickly springing up, is now fully developed in numerous Christian foundations.

It was generally by humble parish priests, who had escaped the fury of the Revolution, that these Communities were founded. They would begin by assembling a few pious young women of the poorer classes, to whom they intrusted the education of the young and the care of the sick. Then postulants arrived, and so in the course of time the little band became the nucleus of a Community to which the priest gave the habit of religion, and rules modelled on the old lines, but adapted to modern needs.

This is the simple history of all the flourishing Communities which have now in their hands the education of the Catholic youth of Western France.

Whilst throughout La Vendée, which had suffered so severely from fire and sword, these religious Orders were springing up into renewed life, Angers in particular, the City of Convents, in which before the Revolution there were four Benedictine Abbeys, besides many other Communities, was early chosen as the resort of devoted nuns, whose work was either

secretly. In our present condition it is the living, the distinguishing mark of Catholicism."

In a few months the whole of La Vendée was consecrated to the Sacred Heart, and all the "white" soldiers wore the sacred image on their breasts.

Mother Pelletier in all these things ever remained a true daughter of La Vendée—in the faith strong to move mountains, or stretch the walls of her convents when they became too narrow, in her constant friendship, in her extreme kindness and hospitality, in her zeal for churches and their altars, and finally in her love for the devotions set forth by the Church, and particularly for that of the Sacred Heart.

There seems something like a direct Providence in her vocation from the depths of La Vendée, a country of soldiers, a land devoted to the Sacred Heart, to spend her life in a convent of Venerable Father Eudes, one of the first apostles of the Sacred Heart, who, long before the time of Blessed Margaret Mary, composed Offices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to be recited in the religious communities he founded.

Again, the establishment by Mother Pelletier of the Generalat in Anjou, where the devotion to the Sacred Heart first became popular, as a remedy against the worst evils of society, seems like a Divine plan for the extension of this devotion to meet the needs of our own time.

From the Sacred Heart of Jesus the Foundress of the Good Shepherd and her daughters must ever draw their zeal for the conversion of sinners, and there, also, they must look for that prodigious success which has hitherto attended their efforts, and in less than fifty years has spread their work throughout the world.

LIFE OF THE
REV. MOTHER PELLETIER

CHAPTER I

THE PELLETIER FAMILY—BIRTH OF ROSE-VIRGINIE

Her parents—M. Pelletier—Mme. Pelletier—The war in La Vendée —Her parents' flight to Noirmoutier—Horrors of the war in Noirmoutier—Birth of Rose-Virginie — Her baptism — Island of Noirmoutier — Home of the Pelletier family—S. Philbert —Rose-Virginie's devotion to the saint—Charity of her parents —Early lessons—Catechism—First Communion—Her father's death—She is sent to the Ursuline Convent—Her piety—Her amusements on the sea-shore — Affection for her parents— Attachment to the island of Noirmoutier.

Rose-Virginie Pelletier was born of one of those Vendéen families which withstood the attacks of the great Revolution, and remained steadfast to their traditional faith.

Her father, Joseph Pelletier, one of six brothers, all educated to liberal professions, was a physician at Soullans, near Challans, in the diocese of Luçon, the country known as Le Marais la Vendée, which Charette, with his brave band, defended against the Republican armies, whilst Cathelineau still held Anjou.

His father, another Joseph Pelletier, was proprietor

of the Château de la Garçonnière-en-Touvois, and was also a notary and *procureur*. His sister had married one of the Knights of St. Louis.

Rose's father, who, in the legal phraseology which prevailed before the year 1800, is described as a "master" or "sworn" surgeon, having finished his studies for the medical profession, obtained a practice at Soullans, where he married Anne Mourain, daughter of another physician in the same town. Her mother, Anne Bonnin, belonged to a family which had given to the Church many distinguished priests, and which was connected with some of the best *bourgeoises* families of the country.

The curé, M. Guillon, called by his parishioners Monsieur le Prieur, a title which had formerly been attached to the living, had been sent to Soullans by his bishop on account of his zeal and piety. It was a somewhat difficult parish of considerable importance, containing about 2000 souls, among whom were about twenty families belonging either to the nobility or upper middle class, and notably the Mourain family, who retained the solid faith and simple manners of the early Church. Upon these the priest could always rely for support and assistance in carrying out any good work.

Mademoiselle Anne Mourain was twenty years old when M. Pelletier, nine years her senior, sought her hand in marriage.

Beside her mother's pious training in every Christian virtue, she had been for ten years under the

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direction of M. Guillon, and she came to her husband, bringing not only the worldly goods which, as the only child of her parents, was her portion, but the far more precious heirloom of religion, the family tradition of her people. The wedding itself, which took place on the 7th August 1781, wore the aspect of a religious festival. M. Guillon and his two assistant-priests acted as the bride's witnesses, and her uncle, M. Bonnin, canon of the Collegiate Church of Montaign, gave the nuptial benediction.

God regarded with favour the Christian home thus founded, and, for nine years, the happy family were a source of edification to their fellow-townsfolk.

In these small Vendéen towns grouped round the church, there exists the old-fashioned civil hierarchy of an ideal city, in which, after the priest and the mayor, the doctor takes high rank. His functions and influence always assure to him considerable importance; but when his political, and above all his religious principles unite him to the curé, the two together lead the whole parish. Until 1790, M. Guillon and M. Pelletier worked in this kind of harmony in Soullans, the one occupied with the spiritual needs of the people, and the other looking after their corporal well-being. Meantime Mme. Pelletier found occupation in bringing up her children, of whom, in 1791, she had seven. At the baptism of her first child, her cousin, the Abbé Louis Mourain, tonsured clerk in Holy Orders, stood proxy for Canon Bonnin, who was godfather.

When the force of the Revolution was turned against religion and its ministers, Mme. Pelletier, a thorough Christian and devoted to the clergy, signalised herself by her devotion in receiving and concealing in her own house those faithful priests, and among them her own curé, who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the civil constitution. M. Neau, who had succeeded M. Guillon as curé of Soullans, in 1790, was hunted through the district of Challans. He was hidden now in one farmhouse, now in another; rewarding the hospitality of those who gave him shelter by celebrating the Holy Mysteries, but at length was surprised by the "Blues" one day in the summer of 1793, just after he had finished his Mass, and was pitilessly murdered near Clouzils, a farm in his own parish.

Those suspected of harbouring priests began now to be watched, and Soullans, constantly occupied by the Republican troops, on account of its strategical position, became more and more unsafe for those Vendéen families whose devotion to their king and religion was well known. M. Pelletier at this time, therefore, like many other Catholics and Royalists in the neighbourhood of Challans, gave up his home and situation, and moved from Soullans to the island of Noirmoutier. It would have been impossible to expose his wife and seven little children to the fury and scenes of bloodshed which now began to rage in Anjou and Poitou. From the Layon of Anjou to the Marais of La Vendée rose one bitter cry of distress.

The civil war, which ruthlessly burned down churches and houses, and decimated alike the armies of the "Whites" and their enemy, the "Blues," spared neither age nor sex; and until the mad fury should be appeased, the first instinct was that of flight.

Noirmoutier, separated at that time from Challans, and the neighbouring villages and small towns, by marsh land, untraversed by any very practicable roads, and divided from the mainland by an arm of the sea, seemed to offer a safe asylum from the horrors of the war. It was, moreover, a Royalist stronghold. Upon the 13th March 1793, the Royalists of the island, under De Guéry and De la Fortinière, had, with the aid of their allies from the Marais, captured it.

The journey was long and difficult for Mme. Pelletier and her young family. One of M. Pelletier's farmers conducted them across the canals of the Marais, and through the long Avenue du Gois, by which, at low tide, the island may be reached; but several times the man was obliged to carry them on his back over places from which the water never quite retires.

But the unfortunate emigrants had counted too securely on safety. Few parishes were the scenes of massacres so horrible as that which the island of Noirmoutier experienced. The Revolutionists, exasperated by the resistance opposed to them before they finally reached this extreme point, committed murder wholesale, drowning many of their victims and shooting others.

On the 13th of January 1794, Haxo and Dutruys, with 6000 men, attacked the island, defended by 1200 Royalist soldiers. The town was taken, and then followed a hunt for military and civil Royalists, as if they had been wild animals. In the space of a few months 1200 victims were slaughtered, some belonging to the town, some to Barbâtre. The Pelletiers escaped death, but the mental torture they underwent as Christians and Royalists of La Vendée defies description. Nor did there seem any end to all these horrors. The Church was burnt. The priests who had sought a refuge in the island were all massacred. For seven years public worship was suspended. There were no Masses, no sacraments, no pious ceremonies. It was an intolerable state of things for Catholics. The people of Barbâtre, the most Royalist parish in the island, wrote to their pastor, M. Bousseau, who had taken refuge in Germany, that the misfortune hardest to bear was the loss of spiritual privileges. The island was so small that, garrisoned as it always was by Republican troops, there was less opportunity than in other places for the return of the clergy.

It was while this condition of things still lasted that Rose-Virginie, eighth child of her parents, was born on the Feast of St. Ignatius, July 31, 1796.

She was baptized on the day of her birth by her parents, but, of course, as soon as an occasion offered, they presented her to a priest to complete the ceremonies, and if deemed necessary give her conditional baptism.

In 1797, M. Gergaud, a brave priest, who had been in hiding at Nantes during the worst of the Terror, visited his own parish and others adjoining, and solemnised marriages and administered other sacraments. He came to Noirmoutier, and there baptized a great many children in the drawing-room of Mme. Frédéric Richer. Rose-Virginie and two little girls, afterwards her intimate friends, then received all the ceremonies of baptism. The parents of her little companions, present upon this deeply touching occasion, handed down the story, which became a family tradition, that took the place of the usual register, for M. Gergaud, the over-worked, wandering missionary, had no time to keep formal records of the sacraments he administered. It is believed that Rose-Virginie's eldest sister was her godmother.

The child, born under the Terror in the darkest days of the Revolution, always had something of the spirit of the Vendéen soldier, who fought for his faith and suffered for his political convictions.

She had the true Vendéen heart, the devotion of the priests and faithful who laid down their lives for their God and for their king. She was brought up by a mother who must often have told her stirring tales of the war in Soullans and Noirmoutier, and her young mind expanded in an atmosphere of Christian heroism.

Noirmoutier, where she was born, is an island belonging to La Vendée. It stretches along the coast for some miles not far from the mainland.

The ocean waves, furiously driven against the shores by the prevailing west winds, are so violent that the island, were it not protected, like Holland, by dykes and artificial works, would probably have gradually disappeared.

To the west, where the soil is raised by alluvial deposit, there is, at low tide, a passage to the mainland, called the Gois or Goua. To the north-east the island is clothed with oaks and pines, which come down to the very water's edge; and the contrast of the dark green woods, stretching down to the beach of dazzling white sand, lying between two huge rocks, which look as if left by some giant hand, is a lovely view from ships approaching from Pornic. Beneath the woods, which have the appearance of endless forests, lies the sea—calm always in the sheltered bays which face the mainland, always stormy and noisy where exposed to the north-west.

Closer to the shore, the picture becomes defined and changes. Beneath the trees the glancing light flecks stones, plants, and flowers, assuming the tint of everything it touches. Even along the Mediterranean coast there can hardly be anything more lovely.

But a little to the west nothing is heard but the great roar of the ocean, like the clamour of a multitude of great voices uttering discordant cries—now threatening, now enticing.

Noirmoutier is the land of legends: here fairies and will-o'-the-wisps furnish matter for stirring and dramatic fireside tales. The voices of the ocean become living

voices; the strength of the waves is endowed with personality, under the form of good and bad fairies.

But the people of Noirmoutier, cradled among legends which cling to every nook and corner of the island, are by no means either dreamy or lazy. They are, on the contrary, remarkably hard-working. The older men go out to fish, and have a hard fight with the ocean; the younger stay at home and cultivate the land, which is singularly fertile. No one is very rich, but, on the other hand, though there is plenty of severe toil, there is no extreme of poverty; and for those in need there is charitable aid. Religion, with its consolations and ceremonies, softens and alleviates the week-day's toil, and on Sunday all labour ceases, leaving the people leisure to attend to the offices of the Church.

Among these generous island folk in this country, with its charm and peculiarities, eminently calculated to foster the growth of the imagination and deepen susceptibility, were passed the very early days of Rose-Virginie's childhood. Her father's house, an unpretending dwelling with a pointed roof, consisted of some rooms on the ground floor and a flat above. It was near the church, in one of the principal streets of Noirmoutier, and close also to the home of Joseph Guérin, a young seminarist, who, as a volunteer in the Papal army, was killed at the battle of Castelfidardo, thus dying in the service of the Church. These two great servants of God must surely have brought His blessing upon their birthplace.

Rose-Virginie was very fond of spending her holidays on the beach, or out upon the rocks, where the sea dashes up noisily. She was always foremost among her companions and at the head of every scheme, the others naturally submitting to the joyous eagerness of her daring spirit. This freedom of movement and outdoor life in the pure sea air, whilst her constitution was in course of formation, no doubt laid the foundations of that natural strength which in after years made her capable of such great toil. She always retained her sense of the action of God in the wonders of nature, and of His presence in the fair scenes that land and water present; and this sentiment, common to all thoroughly Christian and upright souls, was no doubt deepened by her having been both very young and very susceptible when she spent so much time in the open air.

Noirmoutier piously cherishes traditions of the holiness and good works of St. Philbert, a monk who was among the first to evangelise and civilise France; and the little Rose-Virginie, her youthful mind open to every good impulse, must have shared the admiring devotion for the great saint which surrounded her.

With the pious pilgrims who visited his tomb, she must have kissed it, and out of devotion passed under the sarcophagus. Perhaps already in the young heart was sown the germ of that zeal which was to draw her, as it had the saint, to found religious colonies to go out and save souls. St. Philbert, the page of Dagobert, the friend of St. Ouen, the founder of

Jumièges, the apostle of Noirmoutier, first taught the inhabitants of the island how to collect salt and how to build dykes to withstand the sea.

The people love their holy patron, the memory of whose spiritual and temporal benefits still lingers in the island.

Rose-Virginie loved with her young friends to visit a cave on the coast which the sea has hollowed out of the rock, called St. Philbert's Cave, where, it is said, the saint used to retire for prayer and meditation. When she entered it she always became quiet and recollected. Even as a child she felt awed in the presence of objects associated with the saints, and loved to be in places where they had been—to mingle, as it were, her voice with theirs, and share in their devotion—the best frame of mind a pilgrim surely could have.

Another saint, according to tradition, lived in this cave, a hermit, St. Adalard, grandson of Charles Martel, and Abbot of Corbie, sent to Noirmoutier by order of Louis le Débonnaire; and to Rose-Virginie it seemed a hallowed spot, favourable to prayer and meditation on the goodness of Divine Providence.

Her parents, beloved by their children, were also much respected in Noirmoutier. M. Pelletier was very charitable, and traits of his generosity were long remembered in the island. One day he saw a poor peasant lying on the road, and, approaching him, found he had broken his leg. As his home was far off, M. Pelletier lifted him from the ground and carried

him to his own house, placed him in his own bed, and, aided by Mme. Pelletier as nurse, kept him there till he was cured. He used to attend the sick poor without taking any fee, and, when they were in want, sent them to his wife for meat, wine, linen, and clothes. In 1843, an old inhabitant of Noirmoutier, to whose wife Mme. Pelletier had often been kind, said of her, "Mme. Pelletier is charity personified." She was not satisfied with giving alms to those who came to ask; she would go even to their homes, attend to their wants, and nurse them. "How often have I seen her," said the father of one of the Lay Sisters of the Good Shepherd, "come in and make my sick wife's bed and tidy up the whole house. When I saw everything so clean and nice, I used to say to my wife, 'The Good Angel' has been here again."

These lessons of charity bore their fruit in Rose-Virginie. In the atmosphere of a Christian home the child's heart is gradually moulded in the love of God and man; and the love, charity, and devotion which it sees daily practised become dear for the sake of the parents it already loves. In such a school of charity Rose-Virginie was trained by parents devoted to the service of God and their neighbour; and, in after days, the same Divine charity was the mainspring of her life and great work.

The Revolution had deprived Noirmoutier, and most towns of La Vendée, of the usual means of education. There were no schoolmasters, and religious communities had either been driven away or dispersed. Mme.

Pelletier was therefore her children's first teacher, assisted by a person belonging to her native place, whose kind affectionate nature and honest purpose made up for her lack of instruction. Rose-Virginie never forgot this good woman, and used often to send her thoughtful little gifts in token of her affection and gratitude.

As soon as she was old enough, Rose-Virginie was sent to catechism, where she was soon noticed for her quick intelligence. The curé of the parish, a confessor of the faith, had been an exile, and was too great an invalid to give the instructions himself; but sometimes, to please his people, he would allow himself to be carried into the church porch, where parents and children gathered round him to kiss his hand and receive his blessing. These touching scenes Rose-Virginie never forgot, and all her life she had the true Vendéen veneration for priests as the ministers of Christ.

M. Moizeau, assistant-priest in the parish, gave the catechism she attended; and, at the age of eleven, she made her first Communion. She more than once repeated to the Sisters of the Good Shepherd that the day she received her Divine Lord for the first time, the presence of God filled her with ecstatic joy, and that from that time she knew she was called to religious life.

Since the Revolution, the see of Luçon had been vacant and attached to La Rochelle. It was therefore by the bishop of that diocese that Rose-Virginie was confirmed at Noirmoutier, in 1808.

Troubles fell thick upon the family, and after her confirmation Rose-Virginie more than ever became her mother's comfort and consolation.

Three of Mme. Pelletier's little girls died. Victoire Emile, who died at the age of fifteen, when Rose-Virginie was nine, had been especially her little sister's guide and guardian, and her death was a bitter sorrow to the child.

But a still severer trial was in store. M. Pelletier died, at the age of fifty-four, on the 27th November 1806, leaving to his widow, ten years younger, the sole burden of educating and rearing their six remaining children.

A pious widow, Mme. Pelletier de Bouin, took the eldest daughter to educate; and Rose-Virginie, the only girl left, became more than ever devoted to her mother, doing her best to comfort her in her widowhood.

When she was twelve, the Rev. Father Baudouin brought some Ursulines from the convent he had founded at Chavagnes-en-Paillers, to establish a house at Noirmoutier. The school for little girls was handed over to them, and Rose-Virginie was one of their best pupils. Very pious, but full of life and fun, she sometimes rather astonished them; and one day one of the nuns said to her, "You will be either an angel or a devil." "I," replied the child, "why, I am going to be a nun." "Do you really think of such a thing with a character like yours?" was the rejoinder. "Oh, I know very well I shall

have to break myself in first, but I mean all the same to be a nun."

The study of her religion particularly attracted her. She learnt off by heart the Gospels and Sacred History; and, when Père Baudouin visited the school, she got the first prize for reciting the Passion from the four Gospels. He gave her St. Alphonsus de Liguori's "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament," a little book she kept many years, but gave finally to a lay sister who asked her for it.

When some good nuns came from Chavagnes to see her at the Good Shepherd, she enjoyed talking these old days over with them, and liked calling herself "the sister of the Ursulines."

The influences which had affected her in her own family were continued in this school, and she was always remarked there for her ardent piety.

Her nurse, named Moïse (Moses), when visiting the Good Shepherd at Angers, used to tell edifying anecdotes of her childhood. When she was still very little she would never go to bed without kneeling down to say five Paters and five Aves for the Church. "And," said the good woman, "she recited them with all her heart, though it took such a *long*, *long* time."

She used also to go with one of her young friends, Sophie (afterwards the wife of Dr. Lefèvre), to decorate the crypt of the church, where lies the tomb of St. Philbert, the patron saint of the island, bringing flowers from the woods and gardens for the purpose. This devotion to the altars, and Divine worship, of the

Church was among the virtues that remained most striking in her as foundress of the Good Shepherd.

Early impressions are ever strongest, and doubtless the grand scenes of nature, among which Mother Pelletier passed her early years, suggested to her, later on, the impressive imagery which she frequently used in her instructions. For instance, in her conferences and letters, one can easily trace a far-off memory of the grand spectacle the sea ever presented to her childish gaze. She loved to speak of the Church as a bark upon the sea, now tossed by the waves, now apparently safe in calm waters, but still ever in peril. In these figures she, no doubt, reproduced the indelible impression created by the great waves that beat against the island home of her childhood, just as, in regarding life as a perpetual combat, she was again perhaps recalling the sight of men battling with the sea waves.

For four years after her father's death, the family stayed at Noirmoutier. Her eldest sister, Anne, was married at Bouin, on the 25th June 1810, to M. Marsaud, a rich proprietor, much to the satisfaction of her family.

A few months later, on the 10th August 1810, Rose-Virginie and her friend Sophie Duchemin stood as sponsors for twins, the children of a poor woman. Years afterwards Rose-Virginie found a situation at Angers for her godson, and sent for him; but he became homesick there, and went back to Noirmoutier and the sea.

To Madame Pelletier it was a place of exile, and her

husband dead, she found it impossible to bear living there; she therefore resolved to go back to Soullans to be near her own people. Rose-Virginie had always been her father's favourite child, her strong, firm, eager character suiting him, and she in return was devoted to him. After his death she fell into a kind of hopeless sadness, hating to leave the house, perhaps because it gave her pain to meet the indifferent world outside; or perhaps because she could not bear to leave her mother, upon whom she showered care and love, concentrating, as it seemed, upon her all the affection she used to divide between both parents.

She was so devotedly attached to her mother that when, in 1843, years after her death, a person from Noirmoutier spoke of her and her goodness, Mother Euphrasie burst into a flood of tears. A religious seeing her emotion, asked her how it was she had never spoken to the sisters of her mother. "Because," she answered, "never since I had the misfortune to lose her have I been able to utter her name without breaking down. I loved her so dearly that when they told me she was dead I too nearly died."

It was towards the close of 1810 that Mme. Pelletier left for Soullans: Rose-Virginie was then fourteen. Noirmoutier was ever to retain a hold on her memory which nothing loosened or weakened. It was there she made her first Communion, went to catechism, was educated; there her mind was filled with stories of the Revolution; there she had seen confessors to the faith and listened to their words;

there she had heard the fireside tales of travellers from distant lands; and there she had watched the mighty ocean—now wild with some strange fury, now mild and gentle, as if beckoning to men to come and explore for hidden treasures—always beautiful, always grand in its ever-changing aspect.

Every corner of the island was dear to her: the old church, with its rustic porch, huge pillars, rude pavement, and the raised choir, where, with ardent piety, she had seen the majesty of the Church's ceremonies. There was her beloved chapel of St. Philbert, with its cenotaph in the flickering mysterious light of the candles offered by pilgrims. There also her father's house, the convent school, the familiar streets —each reminding her of some little friend or incident of her childhood. And again, at the extreme north of the island, the old "White Convent," inhabited for centuries by Bernardins, where Rose-Virginie had so often gone through woods and fields to look for flowers with her young companions. Have soulless objects, after all, a kind of soul which lays hold of our souls and forces them to love them?

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION AT THE HOUSE OF CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Departure from Soullans for Tours—Mme. Chobelet's institute—Rose-Virginie and Mlle. de Lignac — Traits of resemblance between them—Rose-Virginie and her companions—Death of Mme. Pelletier—Decline of the "Christian Association"—Departure of Mlle. de Lignac—First thoughts of the Refuge—Rose-Virginie's personal appearance—Opposition of her family and of Mme. Chobelet—Irrevocable decision—Permission of her guardian.

On returning to Soullans, Mme. Pelletier gave her whole attention to the best means of educating her children. Paul, not quite ten, was sent to the Little Seminary; Rose-Virginie, who was fourteen, to Tours, to an old friend of the family, Mme. Chobelet du Bois-Boucher, Superioress and foundress of the "Christian Association."

This lady and her sister came originally from Soullans. Both were high-spirited women of generous impulses and devoted to children. At Poitiers, while the Revolution was still raging, they had boldly opened a school; and although hunted away, robbed of all they possessed, and thrown into prison, they waited only till things had quieted down a little to start again. One of them, Mlle. Lydia, bought the Abbey of the

Feuillants in Paris, afterwards handed over to Mme. Barat. The other, Mlle. Pulcheria, gathered around her at Tours a few pious persons, and founded an institution known as the "Christian Association." It was the first house opened there for religious education after the Revolution, and, in 1810, had 80 pupils, belonging to the most honourable families of the neighbourhood.

In those days travelling was slow, and the journey from Soullans took Rose-Virginie and her mother three days and three nights.

To the child leaving home to go among strangers for the first time, everything seems sad: men and things alike are changed, and the farther from home the worse it is. There is no familiar greeting to expect, and therefore people seem unfriendly. The very houses look different, because inhabited by strangers. The towns and fields are not like those we are accustomed to. Nothing is so bright, nothing so pretty, as at home; and the very remembrance of all that is gone only makes the present more gloomy. Such are some of the symptoms of home-sickness.

At first, poor Rose-Virginie felt as if she had been banished to some place of exile, and she was only saved from falling into a state of low spirits by one of her mistresses, Mlle. de Lignac, who, barely twenty herself, became interested in her, pitied her, and succeeded in comforting her. She used to see her in private, help her in her doubts and difficulties, show her how to make her examination of conscience and

how to smooth over obstacles in daily life. At that time the house was in a very flourishing condition, and Rose-Virginie was greatly edified by the piety of the elder pupils, who went to communion every fortnight, or sometimes even every week. Under the gentle influence of the rule, and, above all, the watchful guardianship of Mlle. de Lignac, in whose class she was for a year, the germ of her vocation developed. A great zeal for the sanctification of her companions was one of the signs manifested. She noticed one year at Whitsuntide that they were not in good dispositions to celebrate the feast, and she asked Mlle. de Lignac to give her leave to preach to them. This being granted, she and two other of the steadiest girls preached during recreation, Mlle. de Lignac herself listening with silent admiration and privately encouraging them. The sermons had such success that, according to Mlle. de Lignac, the elder girls in the house celebrated the feast as if it were the complement of their confirmation. Nor was it a merely passing impression: it lasted throughout the year, and "then," wrote Mlle de Lignac, "I first began to understand that a great work might be in store for Mlle. Pelletier.

To her Rose carried every sorrow. In October 1812, her brother, Constant Pelletier, died at the age of twenty-four; and Rose, grieving for the brother she had lost, and the mother whom she could not be with to comfort, went for consolation to her sympathetic friend.

There were so many points of resemblance in the

mistress and pupil that their mutual regard never waned.

Both were the children of parents who had suffered for their faith and their religion. The father of Mlle. de Lignac died on the scaffold, and her mother was kept eighteen months in prison.

Both she and Rose from early childhood had witnessed the horrible effects of political animosity; both had been trained to fortitude in the school of suffering; both had the same ardent enthusiastic longing for the sanctification of souls—Mlle. de Lignac a strong character appealing to the intellect, Rose more of a tender nature, to the heart. Both had the gift of winning others, the talent of persuasion; both influenced and attracted others, and led them, almost insensibly, to the path of virtue.

Both had the same rule of conduct, obedience to God and His ministers. Both had good common-sense, and saw the danger of opposing private judgment to authority or the law common to all Christians, under the specious pretext of private inspiration.

Both had the power of eloquent speech, and neither ever dwelt upon the hideousness of vice, each preferring rather to attract souls to the contemplation of Jesus Christ and His saints by speaking of holiness and virtue.

Both lives were passed in habitual union with God, and their words reflected the supernatural state of their own souls.

Afterwards, when Mother Pelletier's special work

was the conversion of sinful women, she still loved to draw attractive pictures of virtue full of beautiful imagery. "Show them how lovely virtue is," Mlle. de Lignac used to say, "and then there will be no necessity for dwelling upon the loathsomeness of vice." Mlle. de Lignac at her instructions had often remarked Rose's intelligence — she called her "the little Doctor," to whom she put all the most difficult questions. She and her pupil both had a loving devotion to the Holy Gospel: they knew it by heart, dwelt upon the parables it contains, and meditated upon its Divine lessons. It was the food upon which their piety fed, and to it they looked to make their teaching fruitful: both were thus prepared to build up Jesus Christ in souls.

Rose, who was always kind-hearted and unselfish, was respected by her mistresses and loved by her companions. The girls liked to make her little gifts on the feast of St. Rose of Lima, such as a pious picture or some emblematic device. One of them once gave her a rose, painted by herself as well as she could, and written beneath it were these words, "I always found it without thorns."

Ardent zeal for souls, one of the surest signs of religious vocation, was allied in her to a clear perception of the causes of lukewarmness and falling away. Remarking a general loss of fervour and the prevalence of dissipation in the school, she traced it to a bad book one of the pupils had brought with her and lent to others.

When she was seventeen, and advancing daily in grace under Mlle. de Lignac's judicious care, her mother died, worn out by trouble, illness, and sorrows, at the age of fifty-two. She had asked to be buried at Noirmoutier with her husband, and thither her body was carried—Rose, of course, not being present at the funeral. Her grief was intense and lasting. Years afterwards, the mere mention of her mother would cause her to burst into a flood of tears.

It is always harder to bear the death of those we love when they have died at a distance from us, to have been deprived of doing what we could to soften the bitterness of death. The loss, too, of a mother's love, the being who loves us as no other creature can, is to such a heart as Rose's one that nothing can ever replace in this world. Indeed, she seemed to be almost crushed by the blow; and, as in other sorrows, it was to Mlle. de Lignac she went for comfort. But before long she was to lose her too. The institution of the Christian Association was passing through trials which threatened to destroy it. Mme. Chobelet, who was now advanced in years, had no longer the authority required to govern. Naturally impulsive, no fixed rules bound her, and she was attracted by every novelty. If in the life of a saint, for instance, she came across any extraordinary features, such as penances or fasts, she would propose the same to the community for their imitation. These perpetual changes were subversive of all rule, and the Association seemed to be on the verge of ruin, when the

Archbishop of Tours, Mgr. Barral, becoming uneasy at this state of affairs, succeeded in inducing Mme. Chobelet to hand over its direction to the Ursuline Sisters. Mme. Roland de Bussy, an elderly religious of great experience and highly cultured, was sent, and soon gained the affection of the sisters, as well as the regard of parents and pupils. But again Mme. Chobelet changed her mind, and becoming scrupulous about having abandoned her post, demanded to be restored. Mme. Roland, to avoid an unseemly contest, yielded, and left the house, followed by five of the sisters, among whom was Mlle. de Lignac. This became the nucleus of an Ursuline Convent, the first at Tours, founded in 1814; and in the same year, on the 29th of June, Mlle. de Lignac made her vows.

Rose, without her pious mistress, was very lonely. The voice of God was forcibly calling her to the religious life. Mme. de Chobelet meantime, knowing her value, was very anxious to keep her at the Christian Association, which had been so much weakened by the departure of Mlle. de Lignac. She talked to her of the tie existing between their respective families, and reminded her of the special conditions under which she had been received when brought by Mme. Pelletier. But Rose was painfully aware that the institution was falling to pieces. She relied on Mlle. de Lignac's judgment, who had gone away predicting its ruin, and she had too much confidence in her friend's practical good sense to remain in the house under these circumstances.

While Mme. de Chobelet, on the one hand, was doing her best to keep her at the Christian Association, Mlle. de Lignac was trying to draw her to the Ursulines: she told her a cell was waiting for her there. Her presence must have strongly attracted Rose. Religious life, under the protecting care of her old friend, must have seemed to promise much, but Rose had never any vocation to the Convent of St. Ursula. Every feature in her vocation was supernatural, especially the choice of a community. Natural inclination might have drawn her to St. Ursula, but grace called her to Our Lady of Charity.

Not far from the Christian Association stood an old convent, surrounded by high walls, which used to be pointed out to the pupils as a mysterious place where naughty girls, who disobeyed their parents and were giddy, were sent. They used to pass the doors of the old convent on the way to Mass. Sometimes it stood a little open, and one evening, when some great holiday was being kept, they were all taken to see the chapel.

Something in the place attracted Rose. It seemed withdrawn from the world. This feeling of solitude, which would repel the worldly-minded, and the sight of the sisters clothed in white, brought home to her in what consists the angelic life of the cloister. Among the religious were some bent with age and infirmity, and seeing them absorbed in prayer, she was much affected.

She had heard Mlle. de Lignac speak of the Refuge

as the place where girls "who loved balls and worldly pleasures too much" were sent; and now and then some of the oldest and most discreet pupils from the Christian Association had been allowed, on great festivals, to go over to the Refuge with part of their own dessert for the inmates, upon whom they were also allowed to wait at table. All this must have had its effect on Rose, and given her some insight into the sublime work of those called by God to devote their lives to the salvation of repentant souls. But, however this may have been, it is certain that, as the attraction of grace expanded in her soul, there grew up in her a fixed determination to enter the community of the Refuge, and there work for souls. This was when she was about eighteen. She was only of middle height, but her figure was straight and slender, and there was about her whole person an air of distinction. She looked resolute, but kind and good. Her features were regular, her eyes dark and intelligent. She was altogether very attractive, her manner pleasant, and her countenance strikingly open. The very sound of her voice, clear and strong, was enough to inspire confidence. She had great facility of expression, often employing imagery, and never hesitating. When she was talking she never corrected herself, and it is noteworthy, that in spite of the natural warmth of her feelings, she never spoke hastily.

At her mother's death, M. Marsaud, her brother-in-law, became her guardian. To him, therefore, she wrote, telling him of her intention, and asking leave

to carry it out; but his answer was extremely unfavourable. Neither he nor her brothers would hear of such a scheme. "If you want to go into a convent," he wrote, "go to the Sacred Heart. Your family will never consent to your going to the Refuge." Rose, not disheartened by this first rebuff, imparted her intention to her mistresses, who treated it as a mere childish fancy. All these obstacles only served to increase the fervour with which she prayed to God to enable her to do His will; and one day, so keen became her longing to see the house to which God called her, and to have some conversation with the Prioress, that she got one of her mistresses to go with her to the Refuge. That the other school girls might not suspect her design, she did not put her veil on until she was outside the house. At the convent she saw the Prioress—Mother Mary of St. Joseph Leroux—before whom she laid all her hope and desire, and the obstacles raised by her family. The good Prioress welcomed her very kindly, and promised to receive her when the obstacles were removed.

Upon returning to the Association, Rose, whose absence had been remarked, was received by Mme. Chobelet with great severity. She was well scolded first, and then given bread and water for her supper. The poor child, cold and overwrought, at last burst into tears, a sight which so touched her companions that, gathering round, they tried to comfort her, by calling Mme. Chobelet cruel for trying to keep "this poor little martyr against her will, who only wanted

to become a nun," and offering her their cakes and sweetmeats to make up for her supper.

But this insubordination, instead of comforting Rose, seemed to her only another hindrance to her vocation.

The Sisters at the Refuge who knew Rose-Virginie's projects, were all interested in her vocation, and prayed for her. One of them wrote to her that, while in prayer, Our Blessed Lady had made known to her that it was her will Rose should come to the Refuge if she would be faithful to her vocation.

As Rose's devotion to the Mother of God was great, this letter impressed her very much. She had learnt at her mother's knee to lisp Mary's name, and had spent her childhood among a people whose devotion to her radiates from their churches to their homes, from their altars to the rude niches the Vendéen peasant constructs for his Madonna, and which he places at the more frequented cross roads, or in some old oak tree. This devotion, hereditary in La Vendée, had been revivified in later times by missionaries such as Fathers de Monfort and Baudouin.

Rose, who was afterwards to call each of her daughters by the beautiful name of Mary, inherited and shared this devotion to this heavenly Mother, loving her with the filial love of a child. Now, therefore, nothing could arrest her steps, no obstacle seemed capable of hindering her from entering the convent.

Mme. Chobelet, beginning to foresee the inevitable loss of her favourite pupil, whom she had always

thought would join the Association, now wrote to Rose's sister. But her doing so was useless. All Rose had to answer was, "Why should I be so determined not to stay with you, and why should I feel so drawn to the Refuge if God did not call me?"

The attraction daily increased. At last the consent of M. Marsaud was given. On the 20th May 1814 the baptism of his third daughter took place, Rose-Virginie being sponsor. Something in this happy family event may have softened him, but he consented on one condition only: Rose was not to take her solemn vows until after her twenty-first birthday.

Soon after this Mme. Chobelet also changed. "My child," she said to Rose, "you have always misunderstood me. I was severe with you because you are one of those souls sure to be carried to extremes, either of good or evil, according to the impulse they receive. Now you are strong, walk confidently where the will of God calls you."

CHAPTER III

THE REFUGE—THE NOVITIATE

Rose-Virginie as a postulant—Her clothing—Her name in religion—Father Eudes—Foundation of the Refuge—The Refuge at Tours after the Revolution—Novitiate of Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia—Her occupations—Study of Holy Scripture—The rule—The constitutions—Love of obedience—Her cheerfulness—Her profession—The fourth vow of the Refuge—Description of the moral character of Rose-Virginie.

At last Rose was at the Refuge, happy in the fulfilment of her desires, and warmly welcomed by all the sisters. It so happened that she arrived on the day the Congregation was celebrating the feast of the Sacred Heart, and for this reason she was called the "Postulant of the Sacred Heart." Partly to test her vocation, partly to give time for the removal of objections raised by her family, she remained a postulant for eleven months, and this, although her zealous piety and maturity of judgment were soon recognised.

While in obedience to her guardian's wish she still wore the secular dress, she studied the rules and constitutions of the Order; and the Mother Prioress, not waiting for her to be clothed in the religious habit, confided her to the mistress of the penitents, Mother Mary of St. Victoire, under whose direction she

became acquainted with the nature of the work undertaken by the religious of the Good Shepherd. A very short time sufficed to show Mother Mary of St. Victoire the merits of the new postulant, and she soon learned to place upon her the fullest confidence, and began to train her in the science of directing souls.

Rose's fervour was great: no sacrifice seemed too much to satisfy her zeal for the salvation of souls. She wrote to Carmel for prayers for her vocation, telling Mother Mary of the Incarnation that, whilst in prayer, she had felt drawn to write and ask her to pray that God might some day grant her the grace to work for the conversion of the heathen. This letter Mother Mary of the Incarnation long kept, regarding it, as she said, as a most precious proof of zeal of the young postulant, and of her attraction to the apostolic life.

On the 8th September 1815, Rose-Virginie was clothed, the ceremony being performed by M. Danicourt, Superior of the Community. At length she was to wear the white habit she had longed for, even as a child, at the Christian Association, and she understood now the symbolic meaning the Ven. Father Eudes had attached to it. The habit, belt, and scapular and mantle, all white, to remind the sisters of the angelic purity to which they are to aspire, and to teach the poor girls under their care a great love of the same virtue. Over their heart a small blue cross is worn inside the robe, to remind the sisters of the Passion our Lord endured for them, and for those under their

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care; and to remind them that they too must bear the Cross in the spirit of expiation, it is made of blue material, the colour of the sky, because the way of the Cross leads to heaven. The religious also wear a silver heart round the neck, upon which is engraved, in relief, the image of our Blessed Lady carrying the Divine Child in her arms, and framing the image on either side is a branch of lilies and roses. This is to signify that they should keep Jesus and Mary in their heart by the holy virtue of chastity, of which the lily is the emblem, the rose showing that the zeal of their charity should be like the perfume of that flower. The very thorns of the latter have a mystic sense, reminding the novice that from henceforth her heart must be hedged from every love save that of the Divine Spouse.

At her clothing the novice receives the name she is to bear in religion.

Rose had read St. Theresa's life and many of her works; she was also corresponding with a Carmelite nun in Tours, and, her mind filled with admiration of this great saint's zeal for souls, she asked to be called Theresa. She was, however, told by the Superioress that there might be presumption in the choice of a name so celebrated in cloister annals, and so, full of confusion, Rose-Virginie, turning to the "Lives of the Saints," found a more obscure name, which the Superioress allowed her to take. It was that of the "dear little St. Euphrasia."

The Greek Church specially honours this saint for

her gift of miracles and her victories over the devil She was related to the Emperor Theodosius the younger, and was piously brought up by her mother. She entered the cloister to satisfy her devotion for prayer and humiliation, and died at the age of thirty. Her name, hardly noticed among the "Lives of the Saints," signifies, "One who speaks well." The novice verified later on the name, "One who speaks well," and caused her patroness to be reverenced in the uttermost parts of the world to which her order had spread. This name, though hidden in the "Lives of the Saints," will be held in benediction, and pronounced with joy and gratitude, wherever the Daughters of the Good Shepherd are established.

Rose-Virginie's clothing was celebrated with rather more than customary solemnity. The story of her vocation had interested some persons of consequence in Tours, and they asked leave to be present. A celebrated preacher was also invited, and he took for his text these words, "Peace with God, peace with your neighbour, peace with yourselves," proceeding to show how the future novice might possess this threefold peace. The sermon was full of unction, and the audience were deeply touched by it, and by the remembrance of the postulant's courage in responding to her vocation. Here let us for a time leave the novice, whose desires were now fulfilled, to give some account of the Institute which she has entered.

The Sisters of the Refuge at Tours belonged to the

Order of Our Lady of Charity, founded at Caen, by the Venerable Father, John Eudes, in the seventeenth century.

John Eudes was born at Ré, near Argentan, in Normandy. He was educated at a Jesuit college, and desiring to give himself entirely to God, entered the Congregation of the Oratory, but, feeling drawn by grace to labour more directly for the conversion of sinners, he afterwards left the Oratory, to found the Society of the Priests of Jesus and Mary; but, with the insatiable zeal of a saint, he planned an Institute still more entirely devoted to the conversion of sinful women, and for their perseverance in good.

The priest's mission may be fruitful, and his words may convert many; but as with God's grace, so with the missionary's work: to be effectual it must find hearts prepared to receive it; and whatever the good dispositions it leaves, they will pass, as the priest himself passes and is gone, unless they are diligently cultivated. Rain falls equally on road and field, but the road yields no fruit, nor the field either, unless it be properly prepared, and even then the harvest is poor, unless the crop be perseveringly watched and tended.

This, then, is the very work of the religious of our Lady of Charity, an arduous vocation, and one which only those consecrated to God would be capable of continuing. Women in whom nature's gifts have been supernaturalised and brought to perfection by grace, possess marvellous resources for winning souls and in gently keeping them in the path of virtue.

They know by instinct what to say; their patience never wearies; their sympathy is never exhausted; their hopefulness never discouraged; their tenderness never fails.

Father Eudes had studied woman's work in foreign missions, saw how valuable it was to the priest abroad, their usefulness in all the details of education, and in the formation of neophytes; and having laid hold of this principle, he applied it to his own design. He saw that immense good might be done in a convent where virgins should make it their life's aim to reclaim young girls lost to virtue, or in danger through ignorance; and he also perceived the great effect example, rather than mere precept, would produce in such a system. Those who live among saints often become saints themselves, actual experience making them appreciate the beauty of holiness.

He had already gathered together a few penitents under the care of certain pious ladies; but when his scheme had assumed a definite form in his mind, he applied to the Visitation for some religious to assist in the formation of subjects for the new Order. Upon the recommendation of Mgr. d'Angenne, Bishop of Bayeux, Sister Frances Margaret Patin was chosen for this task, which she fulfilled for several years with the most enlightened zeal.

Mother Patin died, and one of the sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge, trained by her in the religious life, was elected as first regular superior of the new Institute.

The rule Father Eudes adopted for his daughters was that of St. Augustine, with the Constitutions of the Visitation slightly altered, to meet the necessities of their special work. To the three vows of religion was added a fourth, which the religious of the Good Shepherd take, that of working for the salvation of sinful souls.

In pure simple language, clear as the style of the best writers of the seventeenth century, he lays before the Sisters of the Refuge the supernatural beauty of their vocation. His views are so deep, so luminous with Divine light, that he can be compared only to Bossuet discoursing upon grace and the ministry of the Priesthood, to whom, in his solid theology, always that of the most authorised schools, we find another point of resemblance. One of the Sulpicians, addressing the young clerics they were beginning to assemble in their seminaries, might have employed just such language as he uses in the following extracts:—

"In order to apply themselves with the more affection and courage to performance of the duties of his Holy Institute, it is necessary that those who belong to it should often consider the following truths:—

"I. That it is the most meritorious service, and the greatest honour that they can offer to God, and the work the most agreeable to His Divine Majesty which they can perform, because there is nothing He has so much at heart as the salvation of souls.

"II. It is a work that contains within itself, and by excellence, all the other good works, both spiritual

and corporal, which can be practised, because the latter are only means to attain to the former, as to their object.

"III. A soul is of more value than a world, and consequently, to assist in withdrawing it out of the abyss of sin, is a greater work than to create an entire world, and to bring it out of nothing into being. To direct and conduct a soul in the spiritual ways of grace is a more excellent thing than to govern a world in temporal matters.

"IV. A single soul is more precious before God than all the bodies which are in the universe, and, consequently, to contribute to re-establish the grace of God in it, to nourish and strengthen it by good examples, and by the pious instructions given it, is a more holy action than to clothe and feed all the bodies which are upon the earth; and to deliver a soul from the slavery of sin and the devil is a more meritorious work than to give liberty to all the captives and prisoners there are in the world. To destroy one sin in a soul is a greater benefit than to cause the cessation of a general pestilence; and to make a soul pass from the death of sin to the life of grace is an action more agreeable to God than to raise to life all the bodies that are in the grave."

Beginning with this exposition of the supernatural order, and having shown that Divine things, however trivial in appearance, have an importance infinitely greater than the greatest natural and intellectual benefits man can bestow, Father Eudes proceeds to lead

the religious of the Refuge to a yet higher elevation, where he shows them the beauty of their mission in still brighter light.

He lays before them the teaching of the saints with regard to the beauty of grace, the hideousness of sin, and the merit of converting souls. According to St. John Chrysostom, "to labour to save souls is better than corporal mortifications. It is more pleasing to the Divine Majesty than martyrdom."

St. Denis says, "To co-operate with God in the salvation of souls, especially of the most abandoned, is a Divine work."

Then Father Eudes, regarding his daughters as associated to our Divine Lord and His blessed Mother, to the Apostles and great saints, in their work for souls, exhorts them to make themselves worthy of the great grace they have received, and courageously to embrace all the trials and difficulties of their vocation.

In 1666 the Order was approved by decree of His Holiness Alexander VII., and in 1742 by another decree of Benedict XIV.

When the Revolution broke out it numbered seven houses. Like other religious, the sisters were driven out of their convents, scattered, imprisoned, banished. The monastery at Tours was the first to recover, and in 1806 was formally reconstituted. There were but few of the nuns left, and most of these were aged prematurely by the misfortunes they had undergone.

When Rose-Virginie joined the community in 1815, besides these older nuns, some of whom had suffered

exile, some imprisonment, there were two or three novices. One of these, Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet, afterwards Superioress of the Good Shepherd at Poitiers, who died in 1868, became closely united to Rose in the bonds of religious friendship, which increased as life progressed, and continued till death.

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's novitiate at Tours, was always remembered with edification. Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet was very fond of relating how good and affectionate she was to every one, and what a wealth of charitable expedients she possessed for consoling those in sorrow. The mistress of novices, Sister Mary of St. Louis of Gonzaga, Pimparet, noticed her great openness, her constant progress in religious virtues, and predicted that the day would come when she would do great things, "because," she said, "there is something extraordinary about her."

Superiors and companions alike admired her ingenuousness and her great simplicity of manners. Her reverence in prayer, and her humility in accusing herself of her failures in exactitude, was such that she was quoted to the others as a model. She never argued hotly, or disputed with her companions; and, as we have already noticed, she was allowed, even as a postulant, to work among the penitents, on account of her maturity of judgment.

Her novitiate was spent in the greatest fervour. She desired nothing so much as to offer herself as a holocaust to God, and to pour out on others the

heavenly dew of Divine grace which flooded her own soul. She would sometimes spend the night in weeping over obstacles which repressed the torrent of her zeal; but she was always fervent in every religious observance, and loved the humblest offices.

One of these was to dust the thirteen choir stalls occupied by the sisters; and this lowly task was such a source of satisfaction to her, that she would do it over several times, merely to gratify her humility and give vent to her love of labour. She was equally ardent in intellectual exercises. Her Superior gave her the Bible to read, in which she found the greatest delight, also the "Annals of Carmel," which stimulated her zeal for the salvation of souls. She had special permission to prolong her spiritual lecture beyond the time fixed by the rule.

"While I was a young novice," Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia tells us in her "Instructions," "I was not skilful about manual tasks. I told our mother that I regretted this awkwardness. She answered that, while I had leisure, I had better make use of it to read Holy Scriptures and the "Lives of the Saints," for that the time would come when I should be overwhelmed with work, and then I should reap the benefit; and, indeed, the more I read of Holy Scripture the more did I love its beauty."

In point of fact she made the lessons of Holy Scripture so much part of her very being that her instructions are full of quotations from it. Old Testament history she knew thoroughly, and always used it to

illustrate or expound her ideas to the sisters. Few women have made more constant or such practical use of the Bible as she did.

Her confessor, M. Alleron, wrote to her, even while she was still a very young religious: "To my shame be it said, you know the Bible better than I do."

She had also a great desire to fill her mind with the spirit of the holy founder of the Order to which she belonged, so that any good she did she might owe to his ministry. She said to her daughters afterwards, in one of the "Instructions," "I may truly say that, when I came into religion, I was so anxious to know all about the very beginnings of the Order that, while still a young novice at Tours, I loved being with older nuns who could talk about them. What I liked next best to the Bible was the manuscript lives of our first mothers, Father Eudes' letters, the abridgement of his life (not then printed); and when a community letter arrived from one of the Houses of the Refuge, I was so delighted with it that I could not sleep at night for thinking of it." With all the ardour of a fervent novice, she loved to contemplate the living rule applied and carried out in the history of her Order. Before her ready imagination filed a long procession of her saintly predecessors, all walking under the guidance of their rule, and filled with the spirit of their holy founder. She says in her "Instructions," "St. Theresa has somewhere written, 'The children of a noble race are told of the virtues

of their ancestors, of their exploits and prowess, of their acts of benevolence, to stimulate them to emulate their courage and generosity. The poor cottager, too, has his traditions of honesty and piety.' Every family, according to its degree, is proud of its history; and each succeeding generation, striving to keep untarnished the name of their fathers, reproduces the same qualities, and it becomes a point of honour with them to keep in the good old way."

Sister St. Euphrasia had so great a love of the virtue of obedience that, before her profession, she obtained leave from her superiors to make a private vow of obedience, and to wear the silver heart hidden under her habit. One day in the refectory she heard this passage read from the "Life of St. Dositheus": "After the saint's death, it is related that a certain monk in the same monastery had a vision in which he saw him placed high in the glory of heaven. Whereupon he marvelled, saying to himself, 'How can this be, that St. Dositheus, who practised no extraordinary severity of life, but who, on the contrary, accepted all the modifications permitted by the rule, should have such a high place in heaven?' A voice answered his question: 'Dositheus attained this great degree of glory only through obedience. It is true he did not practise such austerities as some others, but, if he accepted certain modifications of the severity of the rule, he did so with perfect purity of intention, and to obey his superiors.'"

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was so deeply im-

pressed by this anecdote that it made her weep, nor could she restrain her tears while the repast lasted, her emotion being so visible that, upon leaving the refectory the sisters questioned her as to its cause. It was a clearer revelation to her than she had yet had of the beauty of the holy virtue of obedience: always to see God Himself in those set over her; to hear His voice in their commands; to read His Divine will in the rule; to employ every moment of her life in doing what God wills, and in the way He wills—this was her ideal of true obedience.

As the "Imitation" says, "To be at peace, a man must endeavour always, in all things, to obey the will of God." And, in point of fact, what more efficacious means can there be to rise above all troubles and agitation, that come from ourselves or from others, than to feel ever that we are precisely in that state of life, and employed in that very occupation which is the will of God for us, manifested by either our rule or the commands of our superiors?

It was after listening to the story of St. Dositheus that Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia went to the Mistress of Novices, and told her of the light she had received with regard to the virtue of holy obedience, and of her desire to practise it with all possible perfection. The Superioress was informed by the Mistress of Novices, and it was then decided to allow her to anticipate the time for making her vow of obedience.

She received this favour with great joy, under-

standing the supernatural beauty imparted to the most ordinary actions by the holy vows of religion. If diamonds are naturally beautiful and precious, these qualities are much enhanced when the stones have been cut by the lapidary, so as to catch the rays of light; then their substance becomes, as it were, transfigured, and they shine as if possessing an intrinsic source of light and fire. A similar transfiguration is operated upon good works, when animated by Divine grace, and inspired by the religious vow of holy obedience. God and His angels only know all the merit and splendour of such good works. Actions are great in proportion to the sanctity of him who does them. In the sight of God, this mystic proportion ranges from the human soul least endowed with nature's gifts up to the soul of the Divine Son of Man, in whom were all grace and the fulness of every natural gift. In the same manner, everything done by a person consecrated to God in the religious life has a greater resemblance to the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ, and greater supernatural merit and loveliness, than the same work done by others not so consecrated.

Certain that, following her vocation, she was fulfilling God's will, secure that He would provide for her future, at peace with Him and with His creatures, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's piety was never gloomy: all her actions showed that she was happy, and, especially, the merry cheerfulness of her conversations at recreation. When she came in from

the penitents' class, she would find a place kept for her by the older mothers, who would call her to come and sit among them, and brighten their recreation, "Come, come here, little St. Euphrasia," they would say.

She was all the more glad to do anything for these old mothers, because she looked upon them as confessors of the faith who had nearly been martyrs, for they had undergone many sufferings in the Revolution. She looked upon them also as links with the past and guardians of former traditions, which they had religiously preserved amidst many storms. It was these nuns who had rescued the work founded by Father Eudes from utter destruction. When she had been only a week at the convent, the centenary of the Refuge in Tours was kept on October 28, 1814. She never forgot this remarkable festival, celebrated by sisters once banished and dispersed, who, discarding the painful memories of intermediate persecution and loss, united in one common triumphant celebration, the glories of their original foundation and the struggles of their difficult restoration, as if to confirm their own confidence in the future in store for them.

Her novitiate having reached its term, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was subjected to the Examination, the rule prescribes before profession. When the Superior asked her if she were happy, she answered, "Yes," her heart bounding with joy in the conscious fulfilment of her hopes. She made her profession on the

9th September 1817, in presence of M. Petit, curé of St. Saturninus, and confessor to the Community.

Other orders take the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity; but the fourth vow, that of devoting themselves to the conversion of sinners, which is taken in addition by the Sisters of the Refuge, imposes upon them the obligation of a spiritual ministry, and gives them an apostolic work. It is not merely their own personal sanctification which is to be the object of their solemn engagements; henceforth they are bound to try and save the souls of others, and especially of the most abandoned sinners. None but a saint animated by the Spirit of God could have conceived the idea of thus associating women in the apostolic ministry by vow.

The beauty of this fourth vow, which has converted the Good Shepherd of Angers into a training-school for missionaries, appeared to Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia to be the perfect ideal of religious life. She might envy Carmel their constant prayer and penance for the salvation of the sinful; but the Refuge was dearer to her, because here the work for souls was more direct. Father Eudes, by the fourth vow, intended that his daughters should devote themselves to souls, to purify and reform them, that they might become pleasing to Jesus Christ and worthy of eternal life.

Mother Pelletier often talked of the vows of religion to the novices at Angers, in her spiritual instructions, and always with a heart which was truly on fire with love for her sublime vocation, and her words

were simply the expression of her own sentiments upon the day of her profession and throughout her religious life. "How happy we are in being united to our God, in being bound to Him by irrevocable vows," she would repeat.

Just as she was on the point of pronouncing her vows, one of the nuns came near her and whispered in her ear, "The day will come when you will be obliged to make a change in the formula of the vows." It seems almost like a prophecy. A few years later another religious said to her, "The day will come when you will have great labours, very great labours." This prediction was uttered by an old lay sister of eighty years of age, who came to the Refuge at Tours after the Revolution. It does not seem improbable that God allowed both these good sisters to foresee, in the purity of their own hearts, that the zeal and eagerness for the advancement of His kingdom in souls, which they saw in Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, marked her out for great things. Nor is it to be marvelled at that those upon whom Almighty God has great designs should bear sensible tokens of their vocation. History gives many instances in proof of this. Those who have been appointed to educate or direct persons afterwards known as the founders of great orders, have often been rewarded by a prophetic knowledge to the future of their pupils.

In Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, even at the beginning of her religious life, the prudence of her conduct, her decision of character, her discretion towards

others were so remarkable that several holy persons predicted for her the glorious but laborious life which awaited her. Mgr. Nogret, Bishop of St. Claude, who knew her at Tours, said of her in after years, "If Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had been a man, she would have been Pope." This is but a variation of those other words so often repeated, "The Superioress of the Good Shepherd has a more masculine intellect than any man in Angers."

CHAPTER IV

MOTHER PELLETIER AS A PROFESSED SISTER AND SUPERIORESS AT THE REFUGE

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia second mistress, and first mistress of the penitents' class—Her knowledge of the penitents—Her mode of dealing with them—Her confessor, M. Alleron —She is elected Superioress in 1825 — Foundation of the Magdalens.

WHILE still a novice, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was sent to work in the penitents' class, under Sister Mary of St. Victoria, who instructed her in the difficult art of guiding souls, of softening and moulding characters, and of gradually acquiring influence over perverse natures.

She has left, in her "Instructions," a description of what a perfect second mistress of the penitents' should be, an office to which she was appointed after her profession. The second mistress is subordinate to the first; and to keep the spirit of the rule, and so work with the blessing of God, her zeal must always be subject to the first mistress's authority: she is bound to act in concert with her, and not independently of her. But the second mistress's authority is also real, especially when she supplies for the first, and the latter should invariably behave towards her in such

a manner that the penitents may respect her; she should also avail herself of her assistance.

On the other hand, the second mistress should do all she can to make the penitents trust the first mistress: she ought to lose no opportunity of praising her and of upholding her commands; she should never, under any possible circumstances, make any such remark as the following: "If I were first mistress, I would not do so and so." Any remark of this kind could not fail to bring the first mistress into disesteem, and the second mistress also, in whom the penitents would perceive an absence of the religious spirit and of humility.

The second mistress has a beautiful office: it belongs to her to act the part of angel of peace, and very often her advice and intervention are most useful to her colleague. She has nothing to do with reproving or punishing the penitents, for the first mistress is better acquainted with the character of each, and has more command of the proper means of governing; neither ought the second mistress ever to listen to any histories of discontent. Mother Pelletier tells us that she was once deceived in this way at the Refuge at Tours by a penitent to whom she listened too readily. "One of them came to me and said, 'Mother, there is something making me very unhappy, and I dare not tell the first mistress about it; would you kindly just listen to me for a minute and tell me what to do?' I consented through compassion, but she was deceiving me all the time."

Mother Pelletier points out that a penitent will find all sorts of excuses for telling the second mistress secrets, if she thinks it pleases her to receive these confidential communications. Some of them will even invent faults they have not committed, and pretend they want advice and help about them.

Mother Mary of St. Victoria was made infirmarian shortly after Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's profession, and the latter succeeded her as first mistress of the penitents, in spite of her youth. This was the perfect fulfilment of her vocation, with the fourth vow peculiar to it—she was now among the penitents; their conversion, their very salvation might depend upon her zeal.

It would be hard to describe the artist's work, as with a few colours, or out of a block of marble, he makes the likeness of men beautiful by his own imagination; nor could the artist himself tell us how he puts life and sentiment into the material substances he handles: the work grows under his hands, but he cannot analyse it. Still more difficult would it be to describe the action of soul upon soul—how the one transforms the other, beautifies it, roots out vice, and sows the seed of holiness. This is a work done only by the grace of God, a hidden agency often overlooked, and not measurable by human standards.

But Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia has left some useful notes upon the work of a mistress of penitents, and through them we learn her own conception of the office, and her practical embodiment of her ideal.

She looks upon herself as the enemy of sin: to destroy sin is her mission. It is the one great evil in the world, the thing that defies God and put Jesus Christ to a cruel death, the pestilence that slays souls. If there were no sin, man would be in Paradise: sin prepared hell for him. To destroy sin, or even one solitary sin, was joy to her. She loved to repeat St. Ignatius' saying, "I shall esteem myself truly happy if I have prevented the commission of a single mortal sin." She liked to think of herself as God's missionary, dedicated to the conversion of penitents. She attempted nothing without prayer, whether it were to gain some spiritual favour for the whole class or for some one individual in it. "One day, when all the penitents seemed to be in very bad humour, whispering to each other as if hatching a plot of some kind, I went to the chapel," she says. "There I prostrated myself before the Blessed Sacrament, and prayed fervently to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. After an hour's adoration, I went back to the class to replace the second mistress. To my astonishment, when I entered, all the penitents rose, and, bursting into tears, fell on their knees, promising that for the future they would do all they could to please me."

To soften hearts and incline them to God, she caused them to make short retreats, during which they observed the most perfect silence. During the retreat all joined in acts of reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These pious practices produced such an effect that

she could stay with the penitents for days without being replaced, and her power over them became unlimited, her only secret of governing being that she regarded herself, in our Venerable Founder's words, as the "co-operatrix of Jesus Christ." She was filled with Father Eudes' spirit, and loved to quote those words of his.

"Wherever I go," she says, "I remind our beloved sisters of this—

"'The sisters must employ heart, mind, care, diligence to become worthy coadjutrixes with Jesus Christ our Lord in the work of saving the souls which He bought with His own Blood.'"

Such was the ideal she placed before her, and before her daughters. She had studied the penitents; she knew better than the subtlest philosopher all their vagaries of perception and feeling; and, beyond that, she had a marvellous innate faculty of overcoming and moulding the most rebellious wills.

She remarked that penitents just come to the refuge were generally very easily excited. "I have noticed," she said, "that the sound of a military band and drums do them much harm." Simple remarks of this kind show how well she knew souls. A psychologist would arrive by analysis at much the same result with regard to the intoxicating effect produced upon ill-regulated sensibilities by music or other fine arts.

Music is, in fact, a powerful agent to excite, either for good or the reverse. The soldier follows it to fight for his country; the rabble mob is led by it into

civil war. It has power to lay hold of our innermost being and move it; it sometimes raises us above the realities of life, and gives us the noblest aspirations. The most beautiful conceptions of author and artist have owed their inspiration to the sound of music. But, on the other hand, music, captivating the soul through the senses, may disturb the balance of its equilibrium, and from this point of view it has always been regarded by masters in the spiritual life as an art fraught with dangerous possibilities, potent for evil, and always requiring delicate manipulation.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia remarked also that the noisy tumult of the exterior world stirs up the feverish germs in young blood, arouses the passions, and kindles the instinct of waywardness and revolt. A German poet, who must have held the same notion, says that all the devils who provoke sin and devour souls live in the streets of great cities. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia disapproved therefore of her convents being planted in the midst of cities. A refuge for penitent souls ought to be built where calm and solitude reign. Peace without helps peace within. In silence the soul has time for self-observation, sees its own miseries, learns to long for something better. It lies like a still lake, agitated by no wind, reflecting heaven above it. There is time for practical comparisons between the solid charms of virtue and the blinding varieties of the passing world. The mind in such places is more open to the influences of grace, the good-will more easily directed to the gradual

apprehension and habit of the Christian life. Nature in all her aspects—the very fields, the exterior harmony of all things in the plan of God's Providence, have a soothing effect on the soul, disposing it to conform with unconscious Nature to the Divine plan, and to utter the sentiment of praise and thanksgiving for the voiceless world of the material creation.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia always isolated her convents from the world, so far as possible. She liked to plant them within peaceful enclosures or in places commanding wide views over the country. Sometimes in France she found such situations in old Benedictine abbeys which she was able to acquire.

She noticed that, when penitents came to the Refuge, they often brought with them a feeling of dislike and prejudice towards the sisters, and were inclined to find fault with everything and keep up a spirit of irritation towards their new life; she thought there might be in all this some idea of compensation for the loss of liberty. The best way to overcome it would be, therefore, to make things as pleasant as possible for the new-comer: she must see kind faces, hear kind words, and receive kind attentions; the religious were to treat her with marked favour, and her companions were to do the same, so far as possible.

She used to charge the mistresses always to preserve the utmost delicacy in their intercourse with the penitents, and to be very guarded in their words. Long experience taught her that, whatever

the penitents might have gone through in their more or less stormy past, whatever the sins they had committed, they were all very sensitive and quick to resent ungentle words, or any rough allusions to their past life. Just as wounds of the body require delicate handling, so with wounds of the soul, Mother Pelletier constantly recommended her religious to treat their penitents with the greatest courtesy, and never to speak of their past disorders. She knew that characters which are not formed and softened by long habit of virtue have moments of transitory ill-humour, and while this lasts any reproof is sure to be badly received. At such times care is necessary. If reproof must be administered, it had better be done in general, or perhaps by reproving one of the others whose good-humour may be relied on, and who will set a good example by the way she receives it. The lesson will be sure to go home to the one who deserves it, but the sting will be extracted.

Mother Pelletier used to say, moreover, that the way to convert penitents is not by preaching long and frequent sermons: much more may be done by an affectionate word spoken at the right moment. Their minds are not sufficiently opened to the austere truths of morality to be able to bear much at a time: their hearts must be persuaded by gentle gradual measures. Too much teaching only repels them; besides, the preacher who goes on with his sermon too long, seems to be preaching for his own satisfaction, and because he likes talking. The penitents

are grown-up children, before whom the mistresses must never exhibit the human defect of vanity.

The mistress must always carefully avoid also talking of herself, her family, her illnesses, difficulties, or past life. Mother Pelletier knew thoroughly what penitents are. When they come to a convent they expect to find the nuns devoted to God and the salvation of souls, and dead to the world. They expect them to be living models of edification. She used, therefore, to charge the sisters never to speak of their own personal affairs in the penitents' presence. They have an angelic character to maintain, and the world, with its passions and stir, must be banished.

Mother Pelletier's letters and instructions are, in point of fact, a complete treatise of psychology and religious morals. She understood the necessity of cheerfulness among penitents. Where cheerfulness does not reign, no spiritual progress is made; and, where there is no progress, there is no cheerfulness, for it is both cause and effect. A sullen, obstinate, self-willed character refuses to be touched and drawn by grace; and among penitents there is a subtle law of magnetic influence by which such a character infects the whole flock. If this spirit spreads, the possibility of good ceases. To meet this danger, Mother Pelletier, as she tells us in her "Instructions," employed various means of restoring a happy spirit and driving away the gloomy one. One Sunday, during recreation, a moral storm seemed to be brewing. Out in the court the penitents were ill-humoured, and inclined to gather

in groups. They appeared to be plotting something, and in the mood to ridicule the mistress. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, as usual, prayed silently to God for help. She saw on the ground a grasshopper, stooped and picked it up, then said, hiding it, "Come and look! come and look!" First one came, then another, but there was no sign of change in the faces: the brows were still puckered and cross; only little scornful murmurs of "A beautiful thing to look at, indeed!" The mother pretended she did not hear, and others came, until at last they began to see the point of the joke; they laughed, and actually became interested in the creature. The mother laid hold of this, and gravely proposed a plan of making a cage for it and rearing it. This finished the storm; every one was amused, and so peace was restored.

At other times she would make them sing to cheer them. Singing is good for over-strung nerves, and calming to the soul. When the ploughman in the field, or the shepherd watching his flock, sings, it is always a good sign, and shows a mind free from care. A glad song cheers a sore heart.

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia noticed that penitents often underwent two conversions: the first, emotional, and generally the result of the feelings which attend arrival at the convent, produced by the kindness of the sisters, the good example of the older penitents, and by a certain horror of the past life as compared with the new one with all its calm surroundings. This first conversion lasts only for a season. Winter

may pass well, but, with spring, return memories of old bad days, and the penitents' fervour relaxes. Now the mistress has the hardest part to play. Now is the time to bring about the second conversion, grounded on reason and solid religious teaching, on the great truths—the soul's immortality, heaven and hell.

"The greatest temptations of the penitents," said Mother Pelletier, "are generally against faith and hope;" therefore, according to her opinion, the sure way of making solid conversions was to teach the catechism. She always dreaded the sin of despair for these weak souls, much more prone to distrust themselves than to trust God. Confidence in God seemed to her the first condition of conversion; she therefore carefully avoided telling the penitents that they ought to accept all their present sufferings as God's just punishment for former sins. She would not let them dwell upon the misery they had undergone before they came to the Refuge. Of what use was it to defile the imagination by gazing upon the hideous past? The penitents ought to feel that the religious over them are incapable of even imagining evil. To keep constantly directing their minds to the disorders of their past life would not improbably have the effect of leading them into despair, by making them think their faults beyond expiation. She used to tell the sisters about one poor girl whose death had been preceded by agonies of despair, to show them the great necessity of teaching the penitents to put their trust in God. "Her face was all dis-

figured," said Mother Pelletier: "she had wept so much. When anything was said to comfort her, she would look amazed, and answer, 'How can any one trouble themselves about a sinful wretch like me?' When she was dying, she bore her sufferings with admirable patience. She used often to cry out, 'O my God, can it really be true that you will pardon me? I have sinned so much, but I have wept much also. Will those tears save me?' A day or two before death she suffered agonies. She thought she saw the devil before her, holding in his hand a great book, in which were written all her sins with the most horrible exactitude. A few hours before she died she seemed to grow quite calm, and the mistress to whom she had confided her troubles asked her if she felt less disturbed now. 'Yes, mother, oh! yes,' she answered, 'I am dying in peace. I have hidden myself in the wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am resting on His infinite mercy, and in it I hope everything.'"

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, both as mistress of the penitents and as Superioress of the Good Shepherd, always strove to make those under her direction meet death as if it were the dawn of a beautiful day of unending gladness. She might well be depicted in a fresco on the walls of her monastery, guiding a sinful soul away from the domain of sin, a barren thorny place full of serpents by the hilly road of the spiritual life, up to the garden of Paradise where lovely flowers bloom. At each stage of the journey

the penitent has got rid of some vice and acquired some virtue. Mother St. Euphrasia used to tell the sisters the story of one among many miracles of conversion she co-operated in obtaining.

"We had a penitent who had been the enemy of God ever since her first communion, which she had made unworthily. The poor creature committed every mortal sin she could. She went to communion almost every day after she had broken her fast, sometimes actually taking food to church with her, and eating there to show the more contempt. When she saw lambs, she would pick up stones and pelt them furiously, because she hated the sight of them, on account of their representing the Lamb of God, our Divine Lord. When she could manage it, she would set wheat-fields on fire, just to destroy God's work. But a time came at last when grace touched her heart, and she came to us and asked to be received into our fold. She became converted, and obtained the grace of such great contrition that she would never venture so much as to raise her eyes to heaven. For three years she followed the rule with the utmost exactness; then she fell ill, and, having prepared for death in an edifying manner, expired with touching sentiments of piety. The evening before she died she gave me a picture, telling me with a smile that it was St. Euphrasia building churches."

When called upon to fulfil the delicate functions of mistress of penitents, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia brought with her to the task all the zeal and activity

she had shown in the novitiate. To receive penitents with kind encouragement, to speak the very words that would go straight home to their hearts, to find the way to their souls by tenderness and piety; to give them confidence in themselves, making them conscious of the good desires still living in them, and, at the same time, pointing out to them the means provided by God for their return to Him; to mingle encouragement with reproof to the more hardened; to attract some by speaking of the beauty of religion; to restrain others from committing sin by talking to them of God's justice, such were some of the habitual methods employed by Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia. Her generous soul knew only one regret—the flock was too small. This caused her real pain: it was her soul's martyrdom. "Oh," she once exclaimed, "if we could only some day have sixty penitents." "That is an imagination of youth," replied the old sisters. The young mistress was silent, but she felt zeal for souls consciously growing within her. Yet it was no indiscreet zeal: she neither said nor did anything to wound the older sisters, who were accustomed to a little flock; on the contrary, she delighted them all by her eagerness, and they loved and respected her. The old naturally love those in whom they are to become, as it were, immortal; who will carry on their work when they are gone, and hand down their spirit and good works to benefit mankind. In Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, with her gifts of nature and of grace, the old sisters saw the future of the Community.

Mother le Roux was old, and Mother de Botmilliau was elected Superioress in 1819. She had been at Vannes previously, and had gone through many trials and much labour. She was a person of ripe experience, brought by Divine Providence to the Refuge of Tours for its extension and prosperity. She soon set the right value on Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's qualities, and took her into her confidence; she also made her *économe* of the house.

The religious at Tours were most anxious to return to the convent they had formerly occupied in the parish of Notre-Dame-la-Riche. It was the cradle of the Refuge, and to them holy ground. The chapel, which still existed, was consecrated to them by memories of their first Mothers. The part of the building formerly occupied by the penitents belonged, in 1822, to the Carmelites. After many prayers had been offered, Mother St. Hippolytus de Botmilliau succeeded in acquiring the convent, and, after a year spent in repairing it, thither she and her daughters returned.

Meantime recruits were slow in joining the Community. The old superior, M. Danicourt, had been succeeded by M. Monnereau, already Superior of Carmel, and secretary to the Archbishopric. The confessors of the house were the priests of Notre-Dame-la-Riche. The curé, M. Guespin, a doctor of theology of the old university of Angers, was devoted to the Refuge. M. Alleron, assistant-priest, was Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's director, and was of great use to her. He was a man of sound judgment,

very straightforward, and rather distrustful, both for himself and others, of anything out of the beaten track. Naturally disinclined to anything like mysticism, he was careful to avoid everything extraordinary in the direction of souls. He was, however, a pious, zealous priest, most exact in fulfilling the functions of his ministry, and so much revered in the parish that at his death his name was given to one of its streets.

He recognised in Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia a chosen soul, a soul favoured by God with the abundance of His grace, and called to extraordinary perfection. The difficulties of her position as directress of the penitents would have been enough to gain for her the interest of such a zealous priest, but he was also attracted by the spiritual trials of his penitent: for from the time of her profession in 1819, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia had been called upon to pass through extraordinary trials. Like most of the saints, she was nailed to the Cross by interior sufferings. M. Alleron, with his wise direction, did much to help her; he cleared away her doubts, gave her light in her difficulties, and kept her firm in her sublime vocation. Under this prudent direction her trials were converted into spiritual treasures, and she rapidly advanced in the way of perfection.

She used to talk to her daughters of these trials, and in explanation of what she had undergone, she said—

"I was for several years in that state" (of spiritual trial), "but it is easy to explain the cause of such conflicts: it is in the very nature of our vocation.

If you snatch away from the devil his victims, it is not to be marvelled at that he gets furious and attacks you: you can even measure the extent of your victories by the strength of his rage against you."

This principle of the supernatural life also explains the trials to which the venerable Curé d'Ars, that great instrument for the conversion of souls, was subjected.

In 1825, Mother de Botmilliau's second triennial term of office expired. She was worn out with age and fatigue, and moreover a third election of the same superior was forbidden by the rules. They also forbade the election of any sister under forty years of age, and who had not been eight years professed; but among the elder sisters the religious could find no one capable of taking Mother de Botmilliau's place. Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was only twenty-nine, and, according to the decision of the Council of Trent, a superior ought to be at least thirty years old, and to have been professed at least five years. She had, however, given such evidence of piety and of capacity for governing, as mistress of penitents and procuratrix, that it was considered advisable to seek the necessary dispensations and proceed to her election. M. Monnereau, the Superior, asked and obtained the dispensations; and on the 21st May 1825, he declared her to be canonically elected by the religious, who had unanimously chosen her.

The young Superioress, in her humility, was

alarmed to find herself at the head of a community in the midst of difficult circumstances; and to give herself more confidence, as well as to place her soul in the utmost dependence on God, she asked leave of her confessor to make a vow of obedience to him on seven important points, viz., communions, dispensations from the rule, voluntary austerities, the books she read, personal correspondence, extraordinary enterprises, and his decisions as her confessor.

Fortified by the strength of this authority, and encouraged by the confidence the sisters showed her, she now set no bounds to her zeal. She increased the number of Penitents, and started the Community of Magdalens.

The foundation of this community had long been one of her dearest hopes. She had found among the penitents restored to God, through her agency, certain chosen souls, who, having once tasted the holy joy of the supernatural life, yearned for perfection, and for the austerities of the cloister.

Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia had so fed her mind on Holy Scripture, and especially the Gospel, that God had bestowed upon her something of our Lord's own love for penitent sinners. She never forgot the tenderness, the care He showed them. She used to meditate upon Mary Magdalen at His feet, and once He had forgiven her sins, following Him, even to the foot of the Cross.

To found a new order, with subjects chosen from among the penitents desiring to dedicate their lives

to God, with St. Mary Magdalen as patron saint, was a project which made her capable of any labour, however arduous, and one of the first things she did after her election was to assemble the council-sisters and lay her plans before them.

No doubt God had appointed that the work should be done by her, and had endowed her with the graces necessary to accomplish it, for, humanly speaking, everything seemed contrary to the design.

She wrote to Mother de la Grève, Superioress of the Paris Refuge, where there were *Madelonnettes*, for her advice. "If you have no crosses, and would like to have some," was the Mother's answer, "then by all means found your Order of Magdalens." But Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's plan was deeply considered. Her idea was that, by taking the rule of some community founded by a saint which had stood the test of time, she could not go wrong. She chose Carmel: M. Monnereau, as Superior of both the Refuge and Carmel, undertaking to negotiate the beginning of the communications between the two houses. The Carmelites lent her their books, their rule, their habit—even going so far as to supply stuff for the habits of the first four Magdalen novices at their clothing; and on November 9, 1825, M. Dufêtre, Vicar-General of the diocese, gave his formal approbation of the ceremonial to be used at the clothing and profession of the Magdalens.

Signal favours were not wanting on the part of God to mark the foundation of this Order, in which

already many chosen souls have been given to religion, and many saints to heaven. Through the prayers of the Magdalens many graces have been sought and obtained, and they themselves have often been the recipients of great spiritual and temporal favours. In 1886, two of the Magdalens of the Angers monastery were cured of illnesses through the prayers of M. Dupont, the holy man of Tours, the propagator of the devotion of the Holy Face of our Divine Lord.

The Order of Magdalens was no mere human invention. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia founded it, but God planned it to be what it is. A spirit of great faith and uprightness of heart are some of its distinguishing marks, and which render it soil prepared to receive Divine favours.

It is remarkable that the Magdalens of Tours, who were sent to other religious communities, no matter how fervent or how long established, never could content themselves. Every tree has its own peculiar soil and climate. The oaks of France do not flourish on the banks of the Nile ; the palms of Africa perish in France. Just in the same manner God assigns to religious souls the special rule, the spiritual atmosphere in which they are to live.

A Magdalen, whose life at the Refuge had been that of an angel, was sent to the Carmelite convent, where she behaved like a demon, and was obliged to be sent back to Tours. "What could you expect?" she said, in answer to the reproaches of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. "I had not the grace of that

vocation." Restored to the Magdalens, her life again became exemplary.

Although the Superioress was young, she had soon accomplished much. Buildings were erected to receive new sheep added to the flock of penitents. The monastery itself was enlarged. Her influence spread beyond the cloister, and her zeal was stimulated by intercourse with holy persons.

Her former mistress, Mme. de Lignac, now Superioress of the Ursulines, took a great interest in the religious advancement of her old pupil and in the success of her projects. From the year 1825, when Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia became Superioress, she often asked Mme. de Lignac for advice. A mutual correspondence was exchanged regularly, their common zeal strengthening the bond of natural sympathy.

Another of her spiritual friends was Mother Mary of the Incarnation, Prioress at Carmel. She was born at Paimbœuf, in Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's own part of the country, in 1795, and was about the same age. Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's devotion to St. Theresa, and her having taken the rule and habit of the Carmelite Order for the Magdalens, increased the interest the Mother Prioress already took in her from the accidents of birth; the Refuge also greatly interested her. A correspondence was kept up between the two Superioresses, and each informed the other of any projected work. The Carmelite Mother was as ardent for good as her correspondent: she compiled the work known as the "Treasury of Carmel;" she also built a convent.

She used to talk to her sisters of Mme. Mary of St. Euphrasia with the admiration of one whose own zeal enables her to understand that of another.

The priests at Tours most distinguished for piety and the zealous discharge of their ministerial functions, united in rendering homage, perhaps almost unconsciously, to Mother Pelletier's greatness of character, by lending her their aid, and by showing devoted interest in her works.

Among them was M. Fustier, Vicar-General of the diocese, a person of amiable conciliatory temper, and also of sound judgment as a priest. He was much attached to the Refuge, and doubly interested in it, because M. Alleron, who was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's confessor, was a priest and his especial protégé. Another priest, M. or "Father" Pasquier as he was called, because he was so kind and played such a providential part in numerous good works, was among the Mother's special friends. He was M. Dupont's director, and his advice was held in great esteem by Mgr. de Montblanc; and he, upon several important occasions, came forward to give Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia the encouragement she needed in time of difficulty. Another was Canon Suchet, at one time assistant-priest, then curé of St. Saturnine, and who, being one of the confessors at the Refuge while Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was mistress of the penitents, became so deeply attached to all her schemes that he remained her zealous defender until death. But the chief of all her friends among the clergy was

M. Dufêtre, Superior of the house, and who afterwards, as a bishop, continued his devotedness to the Good Shepherd.

The Mother's beneficent influence was not confined within the convent enclosure, she was constantly being brought into contact with persons in the world through the young girls brought to the Refuge, and these persons were often attracted by her zeal and charity to give her their confidence. Once when talking to her daughters about gratitude, she told them of a touching incident which occurred while she was Superioress at Tours.

"While I am speaking to you of gratitude," she said, "I must tell you of an instance of it in a man of the world. He had come to see me once in the parlour to tell me of a difficulty in which he was placed. I sympathised with his feelings, and did what I could to help him. He filled a high municipal position after the Revolution in 1830, and at that time came to see us again, and told me that he should be very glad if he could do anything for us; that we were not to fear any riot that might take place, for he would see to our being properly defended, and would, if necessary, station police officers at our door to protect us. When we were leaving Angers, this gentleman, out of gratitude, found out the hour we were to start, and came to the carriage we were in. There were two soldiers in it with us, and he said to them, 'I hope you will do all you can for these ladies. They deserve attention and respect,

and all you do for them I shall regard as done for me.' "

The Good Shepherd owed the sympathy of many benefactors to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's constant kindness and charity, known to all with whom she had anything to do.

CHAPTER V

ANGERS—FOUNDATION AND EARLY DAYS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD, 1829

Mme. d'Andigné—Mgr. Montault—M. Breton—M. de Neuville—Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's first journey to Angers—Tournemine—The Refuge at Tours accedes to the foundation at Angers—Mother Pelletier's return to Angers—Kind reception—Poverty and trials—Calumnies—Name of the Good Shepherd—Margaret Deshaies and the former Good Shepherd—Mother St. Euphrasia organises the house.

JUST as everything in the natural order is controlled by the Divine law, so is everything overruled in the lives of God's servants destined to extend His Kingdom. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was now being prepared for greater work than she had yet done, and means were being disposed to her hand by that admirable wisdom of Divine Providence that even the holiest souls only gradually apprehend.

She was to found the Good Shepherd at Angers; she was to be helped in doing it by people most eminent for sanctity or position in the province of Anjou; and all this was to be brought about by connection with Mme. d'Andigné de Villequier. This lady, who was a widow, belonged to a family which a historian of the sixteenth century calls the "great

D'Andigné race," one of the oldest in Anjou, and perhaps more identified with the district than any other that exists. It traces its descent to the fourteenth century; but before that there were D'Andignés among the Crusaders, and Count Theodore de Quatrebarbes, who delighted in tracing the lineage of old Angeoin families, was fond of saying that a branch had remained and spread in Palestine, still existed there, and was known as the "D'Andignés of the Holy Land."

To Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's acquaintance with Mme. d'Andigné, the Good Shepherd, in the order of Divine Providence, owed the support of its natural protectors, that Catholic *noblesse* of Anjou, which has always been foremost in every generous enterprise for the Church and France, as in our own century, when it sent the flower of its youth to defend the Papacy. It is the land of Christian chivalry, and therefore a project like Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia's was sure to meet with ready response.

Mme. d'Andigné and Mme. de Botmilliau had long been united by the links of Christian friendship; they had known each other at St. Thomas de Villeneuve in Paris, and Mme. d'Andigné had often stayed at the Tours Refuge for several weeks together on her journeys between Anjou and Paris; she had thus become acquainted with Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, and had from early days formed a high opinion of her gifts and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. She it was who had first suggested her election as Superioress at the Refuge in Mme. de

Botmilliau's place. Something of the sister's zeal infected her, and eventually she became a strong supporter of the Good Shepherd in every good work.

The plans of God are sure; and when He is the Author of an undertaking, events are gently controlled that it may be accomplished. All hearts are in His Divine hand, and He sees in the same moment things widely distant, and disposes all the details of His own plans with marvellous ease.

The idea of a Refuge at Angers was, in God's Providence, first imparted to a poor penitent. She had been sent from the parish of La Trinité in that town to the Refuge at Caen, and would never leave the home where she had been received and converted. When dying, she asked to see a lady from Angers who was in the house, and begged her to write to the Bishop of that city, and beseech him to found a Refuge there for sinners who, like herself, wanted to come back to God.

The lady looked upon the request as a sacred charge, and wrote about it to Mgr. Montault. This prelate, whose sincere piety and benevolence are still remembered with edification in Angers, appears to have received the message as coming from God: he was so much touched by it that, from that moment, he began to plan the foundation.

He was naturally benevolent, of most courteous manners; but in spite of his very sincere piety he had unfortunately taken the oath to the civil constitution. It is true he retracted, but this did not satisfy him.

During forty years, he tried by his humility to expiate his defection in a diocese where the majority of the clergy had preferred prison, exile, or death to taking the oath of civil allegiance, winning the affection of all by his true piety and goodness.

His admiration for the Refuge and Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia never declined, and in this sentiment he was associated with the leading ecclesiastics of the diocese, who had been confessors of the faith.

The curé of the cathedral, M. Breton, tried to collect money for the foundation at Angers. He had been an exile for conscience' sake in Spain during the Revolution. He was a warm-hearted man, devoted to his ministry, but a little rough in manner, and rather abrupt—witty and original in speech, and a popular preacher.

He loved the poor, who were always welcome at his house, and had a great devotion to the beauty of Divine worship. He had been known more than once to give a chalice to some poor curé in want of it. He was the very priest to appreciate Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her work. Perhaps he might have welcomed both even more cordially could he have foreseen that the Good Shepherd of Angers would requite Spain, the beloved land of his exile, for the charity he and other priests and religious had received there, when banished from France during the Revolution. An immense establishment of the Good Shepherd now exists in Barcelona.

After the letter from the dying penitent at Caen

other events, pointing to the foundation of the Refuge at Angers, seemed to spring up round Mgr. Montault. God inspired founders and they obeyed. Countess Innocente Jeanne Baptiste de Lentivi, widow of Messire Leroy de la Potherie de Neuville, who, with her husband, had been for some years in exile, often wanting the necessaries of life, was inspired, among others, with the noble project of founding a house for penitents. When they came back to France, at Angers, M. and Mme. de Neuville found their fortune almost intact, and it had been their desire to dedicate the money thus recovered to the use of the poor. M. de Neuville soon died, leaving his widow with one son. She spent her widowhood in good works, and had hoped to see the Refuge founded, but died before the plan was realised. She left, however, 30,000 francs for it, and her son had himself taken it to Mgr. Montault. The state of France was so disturbed, and ill-feeling so rife everywhere, that the Bishop had thought it prudent to defer the foundation. Now, however, the appointed time was come.

Every day the Angers clergy became more conscious of the want of a house for penitents; and in 1829, five of the principal curés met to concert the best means of carrying out the plan of foundation.

These were M. Breton, curé of St. Maurice; M. Genneteau, curé of St. Joseph; M. Gruget,[1] curé of

[1] M. Gruget's name is still remembered at Angers in connection with the Revolution. A house is shown inside the enclosure of Nazareth, which at that time was inhabited by farmers, and where M.

Trinity; M. Vincent, curé of St. Jacques; M. Bureau, curé of St. Laud. These gentlemen assembled together, and came to the decision to request Mme. Filion, a pious parishioner of Notre Dame, to receive into a private house the penitents who should be sent to her. But this lady, zealous and charitable as she was, felt unable to attempt the task—"one," she said, "which none but religious accustomed to work of the kind would be capable of fulfilling."

Baffled in their first attempt, the curés made another trial. M. Breton, who knew Mme. d'Andigné de Villequier, wrote to her and laid the plan before her, asking her to try and find some religious to whom the work might be intrusted. Mme. d'Andigné's answer was that she knew a community who would be just what was required, and she told him of the Refuge at Tours.

Armed with this information, M. Breton, with the approval of the other four curés, wrote to Mgr. Montblanc, Bishop of Tours, and, from him, received authorisation for the foundation, provided the religious themselves would consent to it. Then he started for Tours, with one of his assistant clergy, and, upon arriving there, visited the Refuge and saw all the classes. He was much touched by what he was shown, and laid his plan before Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. She was delighted, for, to her, extension

Gruget lay hidden, that he might give absolution to the thousands of victims of the Revolution taken out to the Champ des Martyrs to be shot.

of the Order meant an extension of the field of labour. She says in the "Instructions," "When Mgr. Montault sent a messenger to Tours to propose the foundation, my joy was so great that I almost thought I was in heaven."

But the older council-sisters remembered the Revolution, and, believing another social crisis to be imminent, would not hear of any new foundations. The Mother had, therefore, no alternative but to refuse M. Breton's offer. But this did not daunt him. He went straight to the Bishop, and, having secured his interest, he returned, strong in the Bishop's favour, to Mother Pelletier, and by bringing pressure to bear on the Council, she got the sisters to consent, and the matter was settled.

The next step was to see the new house, and M. Breton, triumphant in his victory, hired a carriage and started with the Mother and Sister Mary of St. Victoria for Angers.

They stopped twice on the way—once at Chinon, to visit M. Breton's sister, a religious; and at Bourgueil, where his family lived; and everywhere the Mothers were made welcome. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in after days, was fond of remembering the hospitality they received at a place called the "Rosiers." Although they did not arrive till eleven o'clock at night, the curé of the parish had supper and rooms prepared for them.

The next morning they resumed their journey, and, when about two leagues from Angers, they caught

their first glimpse of the town which was to be the field of their great missionary labours.

Leaving the right bank of the Loire by the embankment along which runs the road from Orleans, in order to enter Angers from the south, one passes out of country like a beautiful garden into an arid stony region. The green meadows of the valley are abruptly succeeded by fields covered with hillocks, heaped up by the hand of man, against which are propped open shelters built of straw. At intervals, tall chimneys, like those of manufacturing districts, stand out against the horizon. On approaching the shelters, underneath them may be perceived men at work round large holes in the ground: they are cutting stone, and preparing slates for roofing. Trucks go and come, and great blocks of stone raised by shafts, make one conscious of the existence of a busy subterranean colony. These are stone-cutters. So far as the eye can reach, the humble cottages of labouring folk are seen scattered about the fields.

When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia first saw this desolate region of black stone, she, whose work was for the poor and working classes, must have felt that here was a vast field for her zeal.

Along the horizon she would perceive Angers, the *Black City*, as it used to be called, because of its slated buildings. Two buildings rise above others and stand out in relief against the sky—the Gothic pinnacles of the Cathedral, and the Romanesque tower of an old convent, the Abbey of St. Aubin. These

relics of the faith of former days must have strongly appealed to the mind of a religious come to found an order in the old city. She was to restore the work of her forefathers, to rekindle the faith in men's hearts, to build up a convent destroyed by the Revolution. Time spares, even in ruins, what is most beautiful in human works; it is often just what appeals most to our minds that escapes its destroying influence.

When the carriage was near the town, M. Breton, who was always rather original, stopped it and got out, saying to his companions, "What, ladies! you want to imitate the Apostles, and you are going to enter Angers in a carriage!" Whereupon the nuns, following his example, alighted too, and walked the rest of the way after him. It was a very hot day, and he marched on before, using his umbrella for a stick; but he knew what he was about, and that the impression created by the arrival of these new missionaries of the Gospel, in a state of holy evangelical poverty, would not be easily effaced.

First he took them to the Bishop for his episcopal blessing, and then to his own house, the presbytery of St. Maurice.

The next day was Sunday, and the two religious came to his Mass at half-past six. After the Gospel, he turned to the congregation, and, pointing to the two sisters in their white dress, while every one was gazing at them, said, "My brethren, these religious are good for all diseases of mind and body. The

blind, the lame, the paralytic had all better come to them."

His words were received in their literal sense, and, when Mass was over, the sisters, who had retired to the sacristy, were besieged by people bringing sufferers to them. In vain they said that their work was to heal sick souls. The people answered that M. le Curé had said, "All kinds of disease," and some got angry. It was no easy task to send them all away.

M. Breton and M. de Neuville took the sisters to inspect the house intended for them. It was an old cotton factory, known by the name of Tournemine; it was large, and the priests interested in the Refuge thought it would be advisable to buy it. They had wanted to acquire the old convent of the Good Shepherd, disestablished at the Revolution, but the owner would not part with it. It was a large building of the seventeenth century, in Rue St. Nicholas, near the Church of the Trinity, and the work that had been done there was thus described: "Here uncloistered nuns received young women who, having been shut up in the Convent of the Penitents, desired to lead a better life."

A saintly religious who lived in this convent, Margaret Deshaies, in religion Sister Theresa, had attracted much attention to it by her charity and zeal. But the house was badly arranged, crowded against the walls of the town, and inconveniently divided into separate blocks, and would have been altogether too cramped for Mother St. Euphrasia's

zeal. The event showed that it would have been wholly unsuited to the development of the Divine plans for the new Institute.

Tournemine was situated near the meadows bordering the Maine, farther down stream than the town, on the last gentle slope of the right bank. It stands between the town on one side and meadows on the other, under the shadow of the Church of St. Jacques. When the sisters first visited it with M. Breton, it was still used as a factory. Some of the buildings were only sheds. The great community room of the present convent and the Novitiate stand on the site of two of the old factory buildings.

Everything was in disorder, but the Mother saw how it would be possible to make it suitable for the Refuge, if it were put into proper repair.

Did God show her in some prophetic vision that her feet stood in the promised land, that here her zeal was to find scope to expand, that here should rise up and succeed each other one generation after another of her daughters? Did she know that here should rise a Sanctuary whence should be sent out labourers of the Gospel into every quarter of the globe? At all events, she felt no indecision.

She soon returned to Tours, where M. Alleron upheld her in the projected foundation.

Mgr. Montblanc had gone to Rome with M. Dufêtre, and in the Bishop's absence his two Vicars-general, MM. Fustier and Dugied, called a meeting of the Refuge Council to examine the proposal made by the

Bishop and curés of Angers, and to come to a decision. On the 29th of May, the following resolution was taken in chapter:—

"The Mother Superior has proposed to the Community, upon the part of Monseigneur, the most illustrious and most reverend Bishop of Angers, and of the parish priests of the same town, the foundation of an establishment of her congregation in the said city, for the same ends and to fulfil the same functions conformably to the object of their institution, which is to bring back to religion and good conduct such girls and women as shall voluntarily put themselves under their guidance; to instruct them, according to their talents and capacity, in all sorts of work, and to admit also, into another separate class, young persons whose unfortunate characters or moral tendency give rise to well-founded anxiety; that by means of instruction, care, and occupation, a right tendency may be given to the growth of these still tender plants, which, if handled in time, generally develop prosperously.

"The clergy of Angers offer for the purpose a large house and spacious grounds, the necessary furniture, and funds for the maintenance of persons, to the number of six, who are required for the foundation of this establishment; and it is the unanimous opinion of this chapter that the offer should be accepted."

On the 1st June, another chapter was assembled, at which the religious to be sent to Angers were nominated. These were—Sister Mary of St. Paul Bodin, Superioress; Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus

Bedouet, assistant; Sister Mary of St. Dominic Bigot; Sister Mary of St. Geneviève Fournier; Sister Mary of St. Chantal Moreau; Sister Mary of St. Gertrude David, novice, afterwards called Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross.

Although Mother Mary of St. Paul was named Superioress, it was decided that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia should go herself to organise the new monastery, and the following obedience for her was signed the same day, 1st June, by the vicars-general:—

"We authorise Mme. Pelletier, in religion called Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia, Superioress of the said Community of Tours, to go to Angers, together with five religious of her Order and house, chosen by herself and her council, to carry into effect the beginning of the proposed establishment, in all things conforming to the statutes and rules by which their Institute in its various monasteries is governed. And the above-mentioned religious will humbly ask his lordship, the Bishop of Angers, into whose jurisdiction they will pass, to be graciously pleased also to admit and to approve in their integrity the said statutes, to the end that the new monastery, having in its interior government nothing differing from other monasteries of the same order now established, so that the same perfect union which is essentially based on such uniformity may continue to reign between all.

"We also enjoin upon Mme. Pelletier, present Superioress of Our Lady of Charity, that, when she

shall have sufficiently organised the establishment at Angers, and shall have installed the Superioress who shall be sent from here to govern it, she shall herself return to the house at Tours, which consents to be deprived of her presence only for this short time. We recommend, moreover, to the said Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia to curtail the time of her absence as much as shall be reasonably possible."

On Wednesday, 3rd June, only four days after her return from Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was on her way back, accompanied by five religious and Mme. d'Andigné. The heat was excessive, and they had much suffering to bear on the journey. The Mother was seized with fits of vomiting, which made it a protracted martyrdom to her, and, to crown all, the man who drove them got intoxicated, and nearly upset them into the Loire. In one place, where nothing but a narrow grassy slope separates the road from the river, the horses swerved from the road, and for a moment the carriage hung almost over the edge of the bank. The religious always thought that Divine Providence had protected them that night from being either dashed against the stones or drowned in the river.

It was nearly midnight when they reached the gates of Angers, and Mme. d'Andigné could not bear the nuns to go at that hour to an unoccupied house without furniture. Near the road by which they came was an asylum for the deaf and dumb, called Mille Pieds. The directress, Mlle. Blouin, was a person

whom Mme. d'Andigné knew well; and here it was decided to seek hospitality.

Mlle. Blouin had devoted her life to the education of the deaf and dumb since 1779, and she was worthy to entertain the Foundress of the Good Shepherd of Angers. She died a few months later. It seems as if God had meant her devoted soul to have the happiness before death of seeing the beginning of the great work of the Good Shepherd, which was at a future day to be established in the old monastery of St. Nicholas, where her own school for the deaf and dumb had found its first shelter, and which for years continued to be its home.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia never forgot Mlle. Blouin's Christian hospitality, her kindness to herself and her daughters, and all the pious care she lavished on them.

Next day the religious went to the Archbishop's house, where they were received in the Synod Hall, first by the Vicar-General, M. Prieur, and afterwards by Mgr. Montault. The Bishop told them of the penitent at Caen who, before her death, had asked that he might be entreated to found a refuge at Angers. They were always accompanied by Mme. d'Andigné, her maid, and a penitent they had brought with them from Tours. Upon this second visit to Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her party were lodged, as before, at the presbytery of St. Maurice; but on Saturday, 6th June, Whitsun Eve, M. Breton himself took them to their new house. To impress the popular

imagination, he guided them through low streets, calling out, "Let all bad girls come to these ladies to be converted."

Next morning, the feast of Pentecost, the religious went to Mass at their parish church, St. James', at four o'clock. When they got back to their disordered factory, they found nothing for breakfast but the remains of the slender provision they had made for their journey, and nothing at all for dinner. However, in the course of the morning, their parish priest, M. Vincent, came providentially to pay them a visit, and, finding them so utterly destitute, sent them the dinner ready served on his own table. This act of charity on the first day of the foundation was blessed by God. It was the beginning of unfailing devotion and much mutual kindness between the Presbytery and the Monastery, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia never ceased, by every possible attention, to show the gratitude and affection she felt towards M. Vincent.

The parish priests of Angers, whose idea it had been that the factory at Tournemine might be turned into a House of Refuge, made collections for the necessary funds. Many purses were opened to their appeal. Among the contributors were Mgr. Montault, the Bishop; M. Montalant, his Vicar-General; Mme. d'Andigné, Mlle. de Boutigny, Mme. de Villebois, Mme. de Boylesve, and many others.

M. Breton performed prodigies of devotedness for the work he had so much at heart. He went all about

his parish, and got much more than he had dared hope. One day he met M. de Neuville, who lived in Rue St. Gilles. "M. le Curé," said he, "I thought you looked upon me as one of your good parishioners. What have I done to make you change your opinion? I am told you are asking everywhere for money to build a House of Refuge, and you leave me out." "Not so, not so," replied the Curé. "It is, on the contrary, only because I am sure of you. I am keeping you for the end, because you are the *bonne bouche!*" "That is all right, then," replied M. de Neuville. "I want more particularly to have my share in building the House of the Good Shepherd, because it is the work my dear mother thought of and longed for more than any other. It was for it she kept the money she left me. She would have rejoiced if she could have seen the plan put into execution before she died."

M. de Neuville gave 38,000 francs towards the first establishment of the Good Shepherd, of which he became the founder, and, by degrees, gave nearly his whole fortune to the work. Until his death he was the friend and support of the house.

M. Breton, encouraged by so much generosity, shrank from no venture that might profit the work. He heard that the officers of the 17th regiment of light cavalry were giving a grand dinner to their General, Count de la Houssaye, and he asked to be admitted during the repast to solicit alms. When he came into the dining-hall, he thus addressed the

officers: "My friends, I dare say you have all of you committed some little prank or other in your lives; now I have come here to show how to make up for it. A house is being founded in Angers for the reception of young girls who have been led astray. Will you give something towards the purchase money?"

The good-hearted officers each gave him a day's pay.

The Priest's collection gave them funds enough to acquire the factory in their own names, and to guarantee a pension of 1500 francs to the sisters. But before long they handed the property altogether over to the sisters, who completed the purchase, and began to repair and organise the house. They set to work with that spirit of order, neatness, and economy which specially characterises religious communities, and which so astonishes people of the world. The very bees cannot be more admirable in the industry with which they lay out their hives.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia superintended all that was done. Her first care was to arrange a chapel, where they might receive in their midst Jesus Christ, the source of all their zeal, and the consolation for all their sacrifices. The room she chose was in better condition than the rest; an altar was put into it, and the first mass was said on the feast of Corpus Christi. All the friends of the house seemed to vie with one another in helping to furnish the chapel. Mme. d'Andigné gave a monstrance and a censer;

Mgr. Montault, silver cruets; M. Breton and M. de Neuville, everything else that was required for the sacristy. At the first mass, where our Lord, as it were, took possession of the House of the Good Shepherd, M. de Neuville had the happiness of assisting. It was to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia the beginning of the realisation of her prayers and desires. What had she henceforth to fear for her convent at Angers with our Lord there to guard it?

After the installation of the chapel, the next thing was to repair the house. The whole place was in such a tumble-down condition that, some time after the nuns arrived, a drunken man who had found his way in through a hole in the wall was discovered in one of the hay-lofts.

The sisters stood in need of everything. For lights they had a tallow dip; for candlestick, a broken bottle. They took in needle-work to earn their living, but the Mother said she was not skilful in such things; so she tied up bundles of carrots from the garden, which the young penitent from the Tours Refuge took to market.

This girl [1] was devoted to the nuns, and worked hard for the house. Occasionally there was no money for the morrow's food, until she came back with the results of her day's labour. Often there was not even bread in the house, and often nothing for dinner but cooked herbs and black bread. It was the holy

[1] This penitent afterwards joined the Community of Magdalens, and took the name of Magdalen of Calvary.

poverty of Bethlehem; but poverty did not frighten Mother Pelletier. She came to Angers without any money, she made the foundation without it, and, without it, sent out her daughters to make other foundations.

Bishops on more than one occasion complained of this apparent rashness, and her poverty was used as an argument to prevent the extension of her work. The purchase of the Abbey of St. Nicholas would have completed her Monastery, but in obedience to her Bishop, she let the town of Angers acquire it.

For the last thirty years, convents have been falsely represented as places where vast wealth is hoarded, to the injury of the general prosperity. The slander, invented by irreligious bodies and spread by their accomplices, has been too readily accepted by the middle classes. It is a revival of the hatred of the impious for whatever is holiest and purest, working on popular credulity, to gain its own ends. Whenever there is a Revolution, there are always found those ready to incite the mob to attack the homes of devotedness and charity, and to rob and pillage them. The very men, destitute themselves of religious faith, who have drained the wealth of France, and who live on capital amassed by the labour of the working classes (if not in even less reputable ways), are the first to inveigh against the wealth of convents, the institutions by whose charity the victims of these culpable speculators are saved from starvation.

Mother Pelletier was among those honoured by such

false accusations. While she and her daughters were living scantily themselves, and feeding the poor girls Providence sent them, reports were circulated of the wealth of the convent. Some of the calumnies were the result of stupidity, always more pardonable than malice. God's greatest servants, like their Divine Master, have sometimes more to bear from men's ignorance than from their ill-will.

Absurd stories of an "abbess mitred and crosiered" was circulated; but senseless calumnies had never the effect of driving Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia from the good works she undertook.

Mgr. Maupoint, Bishop of the Island of Bourbon, while visiting a convent of the Good Shepherd abroad, in 1870, spoke to the religious of the poverty and difficulties which attended the beginnings of the house at Angers; but he spoke also of Mother Pelletier's energy, dauntless courage, and unfailing confidence in Divine Providence.

He had assisted at the establishment of the enclosure at the Good Shepherd, been the penitents' first catechist, and been an eye-witness of the tokens of Divine favour bestowed on the infant institution, forty years before; and still the remembrance of the Mother's heroic virtues filled the venerable missionary Bishop with enthusiasm.

From the very first day the Refuge at Angers was called the Good Shepherd. The name was popular in Anjou. It had formerly belonged to a community, which was founded in the seventeenth

century, for young pentient women, and destroyed by the Revolution.

Margaret Deshaies, in religion Sister Theresa, was the second Superioress of the house. She held the office for thirty-four years. She appears to have foreseen and foretold Mother Pelletier's foundations. She was the daughter of a poor slater of Angers, and was a servant and needle-woman before she came to the Good Shepherd, or, as it was then called, St. Mary Magdalen's Home.

God rewarded her many virtues by special graces in the discernment of spirits, and even of future events connected with her work among penitents.

In one of the memoranda she wrote in obedience to her director, giving some account of the Divine favours she received, she predicts the foundation of the convents long afterwards established by Mother Pelletier.

In a letter also to her spiritual father, dated October 25, 1660, she speaks of the good purposed by God in the future, through the separation of the penitents into two communities. "In one community shall be placed the beginners, the imperfect; in the other, the truly converted, the perfect, the better-disposed, those who are more humble and exact in observance." Then after beseeching the Mother of God to obtain from her Son this miracle of grace, she proceeds to say, "When I have presented myself before God, it has always been a subject of joy to me that the day is coming when He shall be adored in truth and spirit, and with the

homage of real repentance. This I saw more clearly last Sunday in Holy Communion; and, while my great joy still lasted, I was shown that the second Community shall be established, but not without delay."

Several attempts were made to establish it during her own life, but they were not successful. Yet she saw from afar all the circumstances of the work. "Oh, my God," she cries, "how detached from self and from this present life, in their condition of true penance, appear to me the Sisters of the more perfect Community. I seem to see them dead to self, humble, filled with holy confusion, lowly, and so moulded in true penance that all are corresponding to the designs of God, all in the state He wills, daily making satisfaction to His justice for themselves and for the penitents of the other Community." It is touching to compare Sister Theresa and Mother Pelletier with one another, and to trace the points of resemblance between their methods and modes of action. When a young girl was brought to either of them, the sister would meet her pleasantly and kindly, doing what she could at the very beginning to banish the idea, common to most new-comers, that they were going to be treated harshly. Once a hold was gained upon the penitent's mind, the next thing was to talk to her of all she owed to God for rescuing her from the abyss of misery and sin. If these advances met with resistance, the religious would gently leave the penitent, and retire to the chapel, where she would prostrate herself at the feet of our Divine Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.

Here, in prayer, often accompanied by tears, new light would come. Perhaps new persuasions would suggest themselves, and the sister would impose upon herself the fulfilment of some act of mortification for the success of her work. Next she would ask the religious of the house, or, sometimes, other communities with whom she might have charitable intercourse, to pray for the poor penitent's conversion.

Both Sister Theresa and Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia looked upon their whole house as the work of Jesus Christ, and upon everything it contained as belonging to Him and His Blessed Mother. The penitents were the furniture of His house. "When they do right," said Sister Theresa, "it seems to me like the lustre of well-polished furniture."[1]

Remarkable instances are recorded of the authority both had with the penitents, but it was not gained by severity; on the contrary, it was by gentleness so great that it lent something of its own amiable

[1] The older Good Shepherd, or St. Madeleine's Home, as it was called, was founded in 1640, under Mgr. de Rueil, who appointed the Abbé de Vaux to be director. Henry Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, who was much attached to the community, and had succoured it with large alms in days of need, afterwards made the Abbey of St. Nicholas, of which he was abbot, bestow upon the convent a house situated in the Rue St. Nicholas. To this house Margaret Deshaies came as servant. She was elected Superioress in 1650 (second of the community), and here her zeal found the field of its labours. Her life was written by M. Jacques Gourreau de la Blanchardière, a gentleman belonging to one of the old noble families still existing in Anjou. He was a man of learning, and contributed largely to the foundation of the Academy of Angers. He was also administrator of the House of Penitents, and has preserved many edifying details of the life of Sister Theresa, the humble and charitable servant of the poor.

character to all they asked; and no matter how much it might try human nature or temper, it was done.

The historian of Sister Theresa's life relates one of her prophecies, which seems to foretell the future greatness and amazing charity of the Good Shepherd and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, surrounded by her various categories of sisters and penitents. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia conceived a great admiration and pious reverence for Sister Theresa, the friend and benefactress of the poor of Angers, and regarded her as her model. She caused many researches to be made to discover her tomb, but in vain. One day she was obliged to drive to St. Florent de Saumur. She started at four o'clock in the morning, and when she reached the house, which had formerly been the convent of the Good Shepherd, but at that time was a private dwelling, she caused the carriage to be stopped; she did not alight, but she remained a long time in prayer before the dwelling that had once held Sister Theresa within its walls. The sister's predictions greatly touched her. She knew that God makes His designs known by the voice of His saints, and such utterances gave her confidence for the future. She was fond of telling the sisters of a vision which another religious, called Sister Clare, had. God showed her the future of the Good Shepherd in a symbolical form. The sister saw an immense field covered with daisies, and in it a multitude of religious clothed in white, and in their midst the Blessed Virgin, who told her that that order should be consecrated to the salvation of

souls, and should make many foundations. Then joining her hands, the Blessed Virgin said, "Oh, there will be no limit to the number of foundations."

The predictions of these holy persons filled Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia with indescribable ardour for the work, which she looked upon as an inheritance left her by Sister Theresa and all the other holy religious who had given up their lives to the service of sinners at the former house of the Good Shepherd.

The first weeks at Angers were most trying to her, not so much on account of privations and poverty, but because there were no penitents. She was consumed with longing to work for souls and teach them; and when, at last, girls began to arrive, her joy was intense. Most of these young women came from a match factory in the town, and were very undisciplined. The religious shared with them whatever food Providence sent. One day a mattress came from Mme. de Boylesve, Mme d'Andigné's sister. It seemed very heavy, and, when a corner was unsewn to discover the cause, it was found to contain 300 francs, which their charitable friend had hidden there for them.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's second triennial term of office as Superioress of the Tours Refuge had not yet expired. She had been re-elected only in May 1828, and the Council now recalled her. Several of the parish priests of Angers, among them her own curé, M. Vincent, went to Tours to beg that she might not be removed; but neither Mgr. Fustier, Vicar-

General of the diocese, nor the Refuge Council, would yield; and when the Refuge at Caen was consulted, the decision was in favour of Tours. Her return was therefore inevitable, but it cost the Mother much pain. She had always felt that a great work was to be done in the new house. From the very beginning she had felt she was under the influence of Divine grace, and that men and things were overruled and directed in all the incidents of the foundation. She felt that God was working with and upholding her.

Before leaving Angers she had the enclosure established. The ceremony took place very quietly on the 31st July, feast of St. Ignatius, 1829; it was also the anniversary of the Mother's birth. M. Prieur was the priest delegated by the bishop to officiate, and to bless the buildings of the new house of the Good Shepherd. The benefactors of the work were present. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in after days, used to say that, while the sermon was being preached, the sisters were kneeling in the garden in the rain and mud.

CHAPTER VI

MOTHER PELLETIER SUPERIORESS AT ANGERS, 1830–1831

Return of Mother Pelletier to Tours—Trials at Angers—Petition of the penitents to M. Dufêtre—Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia appointed Superioress at Angers—She restores vitality to the house—M. de Neuville—His education, his humility, his piety towards the Blessed Virgin, his charity—His relations with the Good Shepherd—Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia receives the children of Providence—Foundation at Angers of the Magdalens—Their life of silence and penance.

On the 30th of July, Mother Mary of St. Paul Bodin arrived at Angers, accompanied by a sister *tourière.* She was to replace Mother Pelletier, who left the day after the blessing of the house for Tours, where a joyous reception awaited her. The younger sisters had made verses in her honour.

But God meant her to be at Angers, in the monastery she had founded, to consolidate and prepare it for a great future, and He permitted that men and things should combine to force her return. She had, indeed, scarcely left, when life seemed checked at the Good Shepherd, so true is it that only the soul appointed by God to rule and guide a community can sustain it in its vigour.

The repairs ceased suddenly ; fervour cooled ; rela-

tions between nuns and penitents became strained; benefactors appeared less interested. Even M. de Neuville stood aloof. Under the impulse of Mme. Pelletier's enthusiasm, he had wanted to enlarge the monastery and build a chapel; but now his advances were met with timid answers and want of confidence: the present was paralysed by dread of the future. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's bold ardour had had a happier effect than all their prudence, which chilled benefactors.

The little community soon began to suffer absolute want. The winter of 1829–30 was exceptionally severe. Cold and hunger were felt in every poor household, and the Good Shepherd did not escape: even bread was often wanting.

The penitents who had known Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia began to long for her in the days of trouble, as they had when first she left them. They spoke of her to each other, described her energy and cheerfulness, her marvellous ingenuity in finding the way out of any difficulty, and in shedding peace and joy about her.

While things were in this state, M. Dufêtre, Superior of the Tours Refuge, came to Angers to preach the Lent Station. He visited the penitents, talked to them, and found them in such good dispositions, that as a reward he promised them whatever they should ask. Their request was for the return of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. Little had he suspected how her memory still lived among them.

If God has implanted in all beings of His material creation an instinct which impels them to seek the elements proper to their life and development, so also has He given to men a supernatural instinct which draws them to those who shall lead them to Him and sustain them on the way. There is, moreover, often found in those called, like Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, to the direction of others, an indescribable charm of virtue which irresistibly attacks and draws the hearts of those whom Providence destines to be guided by them.

Mother Pelletier's absence from Angers lasted thirteen months, and all the time she felt an unconquerable longing to return. The will of God was made manifest to her by this ever-increasing attraction. Her letters to Sister St. Stanislaus Bedouet, assistant at the Good Shepherd, are full of this longing, this love for the house at Angers. When she comforts this beloved daughter who had written to her of the trials and difficulties of the new foundation, she speaks chiefly of hope for the future, and of what God has inspired her to do for the monastery.

"I shall never waver," she writes: "I could not do it; I do not think God means me to go anywhere but to Angers." Then she asks Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus, "her dear Kostka," to help her by her prayers: she fears that her sins are an obstacle to God's designs. M. Alleron, her director, confirms her in what he also believes to be God's will for her, and another holy ecclesiastic makes known to her the

great things that God intends to do through her at the house of the Good Shepherd.

On the 8th March 1831, M. Dufêtre, while visiting there, writes to her, "The establishment in Angers stands in need of your zeal and power of governing: it has great capabilities of increase."

On the feast of the Ascension, at the close of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's second triennial term of office, Mother Mary of St. Paul Bodin was elected Superioress at Tours, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia Superioress at Angers, an office destined to terminate only with her life, and to extend its effects to the extremities of the world.

Mgr. de Montblanc signed the obedience for the Good Shepherd at Angers without any restriction or limit as to time.[1]

[1] (*Obedience.*) "We, Augustine Louis de Montblanc by the Divine mercy and the grace of the holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Tours, in order the more to second the praiseworthy and pious design of Mgr. the Bishop of Angers, establishing a House of Refuge in his episcopal city, for which purpose already we have accorded to him, in May 1829, five religious from the monastery of our Lady of Charity of Tours, we consent and command that Mme. Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier, our dear daughter in Jesus Christ, who began to organise the said establishment, and a few months since returned to complete the term of her trienniate in the monastery of Tours, of which she was Superioress, shall go to Angers as Superioress of the New House, known as the Good Shepherd, to govern and more fully establish it according to the form of the statutes and wise regulation approved by the Holy See for the monasteries of the Institute.

"And consequently we resign our jurisdiction over the said Dame Mary of St. Euphrasia, and the five other religious of the monastery of our Lady of Charity of Tours, who already are at the House of the Good Shepherd, in favour of Mgr. the Bishop of Angers, enjoining upon them to regard him as their true and lawful superior."

This act is signed by Mgr. de Montblanc, 20th May 1831.

Furnished with her *exeat*, and the time come to leave the sisters she had loved and reverenced ever since she came to them, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia now felt the full pain of separation. She had not courage to face saying good-bye, so left secretly, and went to the Ursuline convent, to her friend and former mistress, Mlle. de Lignac, for whom she kept all the old love and trust. But, alone in her cell at night, her courage sank again, and a presentiment that she was leaving the sisters at the Refuge for ever made her feel tempted to go back to them. But help came. A holy priest, M. Pasquier, a canon of Tours, a man held in reverence by the faithful, and confessor to Mgr. Montblanc, was inspired by God to ask for her in the parlour. "Beware, Rev. Mother," he said to her, "of returning to your convent in this town. What you feel is a temptation. God has made this known to me. The least thought of returning would be an offence against Him. He has sent me to tell you His will, and to make manifest His designs over you. Go to Angers: God intends to do there a great work for His own glory by means of you."

These words calmed the Mother's mind; and with the sure hope of success, her indomitable courage returned. The next day she left for Angers with two companions, one of whom was Sister Mary of St. Philip Mercier. The gentle simplicity of religious, their very habit, a voiceless reminder of devotion and charity, have a marvellous power. France at that

time was in the midst of a revolution, and the sisters travelled in a public conveyance, with excited men wearing the *bonnet rouge*, and uttering cries of revolt; but, frenzied as they were, these men were most kind to the sisters, and became their special protectors.

No doubt the ascendency of Mother Pelletier, accustomed to overcome rebellious spirits and quiet the most violent characters, was felt here as elsewhere. As mistress of penitents, she had sometimes by a few words, or even a mere look, quieted girls in the paroxysms of rage. Once two policemen brought to her, by force, a poor girl, violently agitated, who resisted with all her might being left at the Refuge; but, after the Mother had spoken to her, she became as gentle as a lamb and began to shed tears. "Well," said one of the policemen, "you have at any rate the sacrament of your habit."

On the 21st May 1831, the sisters reached Angers. Their first visit was to the Bishop for his blessing, and then to the Good Shepherd, where eager hearts waited for them. Directly their carriage was heard, the solitary bell of which the house could boast was loudly pealed in celebration of their arrival, the Community welcoming the Mother's return as a family would that of a parent after an absence of long months. With her return life revived, and with such activity that it was like the fervour of a beginning.

She found a spirit of insubordination among the penitents when she paid her first visit to the class, but, very soon, her burning persuasive words, full of

the spirit of the Gospel, produced their effect: the storm was dispelled, and order, obedience, and piety succeeded it. In the same year, on October 25th, three penitents took the Magdalen's habit, with the intention of consecrating their lives to God in religion.

Three days after her arrival at Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia renewed her relations with M. de Neuville, who was to be associated with her in all her undertakings, and to be the worthy confidant of all her projects. During her absence, attempts had been made to prejudice him against her: he was told she was venturesome and always wanting something new. But M. de Neuville possessed the science of the saints, the discernment God grants to those who submit to His guidance, and when he talked to M. Mary of St. Euphrasia, it became more and more apparent to him that her zeal for God's glory was utterly supernatural, her gratitude disinterested, and that she was as simple and straightforward as she was devoted. Henceforth his attachment to her and her community became a kind of solemn dedication, the source all his life through of many deeds of heroic charity. He became, not merely the temporal founder of the Good Shepherd, but, in a sense, a spiritual founder, second only to the Mother herself. His share in the work was, however, always hidden from the world, for he was no less humble than generous.

Augustin de la Potherie de Neuville had been one of the pupils at the Jesuit college in Liège, in Belgium, when the house was compulsorily closed by the Revolu-

tion. The fathers took refuge in England, and were hospitably received at Stonyhurst, a beautiful residence belonging to Mr. Thomas Weld. Here Augustin and eleven of his school-fellows joined them in 1794. Mr. Weld also entertained sixty French refugees, besides a colony of Trappist monks—the former at Lulworth Castle, his own house, the latter on an estate near it. Two of this excellent man's grand-daughters were afterwards to become nuns of the Good Shepherd—Sister Mary of St. Ignatius Weld, Superioress at the London House at Hammersmith, and her sister in religion Sister Mary of the Good Shepherd. Stonyhurst is now one of the largest and most prosperous colleges in England.

As one of the first pupils at Stonyhurst, Augustin de Neuville contributed greatly to give a high tone to the college. In 1795, the year after he came, he was secretary to the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin. He always greatly revered the fathers of the Society of Jesus, under whose care his soul had been moulded in devotion. He was very fond of talking of their goodness to him in those hard days of exile, when he was left with them penniless, and could pay nothing for his education or other expenses; he also greatly admired their learning. His own library was rich in works composed by Jesuits, not only in French but in Greek, Latin, German, Italian, and English. All these languages he wrote and spoke fluently, but English, he said, was the language he preferred. His correspondence with the first English nuns of the Good

Shepherd was in their own tongue, and sometimes, as postscript to his letters, he sent some verses. Although he had always led a very innocent life, he loved to speak of himself as a sinner, and more than once he thought of retiring to La Trappe to do penance for his sins. He would accept no mark of distinction at the Good Shepherd; and when Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia proposed putting the De Neuville escutcheon on the convent walls, he wrote to her much distressed, and begged her to do nothing of the kind. His humility was only equalled by his devotion to the Mother of God, for which he found an outlet at the house of Our Lady of Charity. Always at midnight, after meditating on the voluntary self-abasement of the Incarnate Word, he recited the office of the Immaculate Conception, and even the fatigue of old age never made him give up this holy practice. The name of Mary was constantly on his lips. He loved to call her his Lady, his Queen, and Mother most admirable. When the sisters thanked him for his kindness, he used to say, "Don't thank me: it is not to you I give, it is to our Blessed Lady." Under the direction of the fathers at Stonyhurst, he had been accustomed from early childhood, spent in exile, to trace the hand of God in all human events; and it was his delight to think of himself as nothing but an instrument in the hands of the Mother of Mercy. His was one of those pure souls who, consecrated from their earliest years to our Blessed Lady, choose her to be through life the inspirer of every act, companion in

every labour, comforter in every sorrow. He gave up his home and large establishment at the Château de la Fresnais, at St. Aubin de Luigné, to devote himself more entirely to good works, and to practise the holy austerities of evangelical poverty. To Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her community his purse was ever open.

The first extension of the Good Shepherd made by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was the reception of the children of Providence. The former directress of the work, Mlle. de Montergon, was obliged to resign, after sixteen years' devoted service. She had been chosen by a society of charitable ladies, and the president of the association, Mme. de Villebois, now offered the charge to Mme. Pelletier. Each child was to have an annual pension of fifty crowns.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia at once accepted, and twenty children arrived on the 10th June 1832. It was a new development of the Good Shepherd. By dint of industry and ingenuity combined, the Mother managed to prepare quarters totally separate from either the Community or the penitents. A few days later, Mgr. Montault came to thank her and to express his pleasure at seeing these children under her care. This charitable work did not go unrewarded in the future.

M. de Neuville knew and understood the Mother, and saw that by means of such a soul, with all its zeal and devotedness, God might accomplish great things for His own glory; from M. de Neuville, there-

fore, came the proposal to found a community of Magdalens at Angers. All he had heard about that of Tours, the Mother's work, and his knowledge of the fact that, among the penitents at the Good Shepherd, there were those who, having had the grace to return to God, dreaded being sent back into the world, made him intensely anxious to make this gift.

On the 28th August, the feast of St. Augustine, his holy patron, the Community was established.

The rule which Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia gave the Magdalens, was in many points borrowed from Carmel, and the habit was the same colour as that of the Carmelites.

In the following year, 1833, the rule was approved by Mgr. Montault, and thus was established the work which Margaret Deshaies, Sister Theresa, had foretold, and for which she had prayed.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia composed a little book for the Magdalens, which she called "Rules and Observances for the Sister Magdalens of Angers." In it she explains the supernatural views she had for the new Community.

It begins thus: "The principal aim of the Sisters of St. Magdalen, and the object of their Institute, is that they may strive in all their actions to attain a great spirit of penance, self-abnegation, and mortification, in order to expiate their own sins, and also for the conversion of our penitents. Let them attach themselves to a real spirit of prayer, and especially to great humility and perfect solitude, placing often before

their eyes the example of the holy fathers, who loved to live unknown and despised, and spent their days and nights in the labours and watchings of a truly penitent life." The ideas of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia recall, in more than one respect, those of St. Theresa. Pure souls, who have passed through the world with exemplary innocence, often feel attracted to the Convent of Magdalens, and prefer it to communities better known and possessing a certain degree of renown. They come, urged by a supernatural thirst for Christian penance. The rule requires that the ranks of the Magdalens shall be recruited from the Penitents' class, and these generous aspirants submit to this rule, and enter this solitude of Ste. Baume by the door of humility. Many servants of God think that the Communities of Magdalens, established in the midst of the Convents of the Good Shepherd, are a source of merit and special benediction to the whole Institute.

"Happy death, happy life, where one ceases to belong to the world or self, to live only for God," said Mother Pelletier of the Magdalens. The establishment of the Magdalens is the desert of penance; there the virtues of Ste. Baume ought to flourish.

The house, although within the enclosure of the Good Shepherd, is quite separated from that of the nuns, penitents, and children. It is, however, always governed by the Superioress of the Good Shepherd and those of her religious whom she appoints to be mistresses. The Magdalens, as they bring no dowry, earn

their own living. They have, therefore, to work very hard, generally occupying themselves in needlework. They assemble in choir, for prayer and meditation, at half-past four in the morning and five in the evening, where also they say the office of the Blessed Virgin together. They meet in the chapel and refectory, but each has a separate cell. Except during recreation an extraordinary silence prevails—the silence of the desert, profitable alike for prayer and union with God.

The Community of Magdalens was to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia what it still is to her daughters, the fruit won for heaven by their work among the penitents. To have snatched from the world, or from the devil, souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus, to have been the means of their restoration and their formation in virtue, to have opened to them the way of perfection—all this to the friends of God, longing only for His glory and the salvation of souls, is joy unspeakable. When a penitent joined the community of Magdalens, it was to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia the entrance of a sheep into the Good Shepherd's favoured fold.

Silence reigns where the Magdalens are. An empty soul requires noise and stir to escape from itself. There is nothing within to feed thought or fix the heart, and it seeks relief from outside in the tumult of vain words. They are the sure indication of a shallow mind. A pious soul, on the contrary, a soul that belongs to God, seeks refuge in silence, glad of seclusion to rejoice

undisturbed in its treasure, to meditate upon the goodness of the Lord, and upon the adorable mysteries of His power. Great geniuses meditate in silence upon the sublime ideas which occupy their thoughts, and pious souls are silent too, because their minds also are occupied in meditation. All sublime things bring with them silence. A religious silence often falls on those who contemplate some fair sight, or admire nature. God speaks through His works, and the soul listens. This is conversation with Him.

Penance is the principal virtue of the Magdalens. The beauty of suffering is a great mystery, but it lies at the foundation of all artistic beauty. From the moral agonies of the heart, which the poet writes of, to the scenes of dramatic horror and bloodshed, which painters and sculptors represent, all kinds of pain have, by human skill, been metamorphosed and made beautiful. In the supernatural order God has made penance, that is, voluntary suffering, chief among beautiful things. The soul that suffers voluntarily for the sake of justice is beautiful. Jesus Christ suffering for the human race is the most beautiful of the sons of men. Painters, moved probably by an instinctive sense of beauty, depict no scene so often as the death of the crucified Saviour. Now every penitent becomes a participator in the beauty of Jesus Christ, in His grace, His merits. In the Church the penitent changes suffering into merit, common lead into pure gold, justice into mercy, punishment into reward. The penitent draws down upon earth, threatened with the

wrath of God, the smiles of Heaven, the benedictions of angels and saints. Since Peter, whose cheeks were furrowed with the tears he shed for his sins, and Magdalen, whose life made Ste. Baume a holy place, the Church has always venerated her holy penitents, and looked to them as protectors and saviours. What, then, shall we say of a community of holy penitents a community of Magdalens?

CHAPTER VII

MOTHER PELLETIER ORGANISES HER CONVENT
1831–1832

Manual labour on taking possession—Love of the Holy Gospel—The penitents—The Abbé Perché—Father Gloriot—M. de Neuville's devotions—Mme. de la Roche—Courage of Mother Pelletier—Trials—Sickness—M. Perché leaves—The Abbé Mainguy—Building the Church—M. de Neuville, the temporal father of the Good Shepherd—Mother Pelletier and the novices.

THE first year Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was Superioress at Angers was very fruitful in all kinds of good works. The children of Providence were received, the foundation of Magdalens made, the monastery set in order, and the ground about it cleared of rubbish and bushes. Great care with regard to the convent of the Magdalens had been necessary, and even hard manual labour. The circular sent by the religious of Angers at the close of the year to the other houses of the Refuge, giving an account of the state of the new foundation, spoke of the amazing energy of the new Superioress, and described her as not only solicitous for souls, but as doing hard work with her own hands.

It became necessary to make a reservoir in the enclosure, and nuns and novices set to work at it

with spade and pick. Presently they found they had struck a rock, which, hard as it was, held no water; but, not discouraged, the work was resumed and continued until at last springs were found with a sufficiently abundant supply. The Mother was the life of all the other workers. With a word or some happy allusion, she cheered the labourers and helped them to work gaily. She compared those digging for water to Moses striking the rock, and applied parables from the Gospel to others employed in pulling up weeds and thistles. Her mind was so saturated with Holy Scripture, that quite spontaneously she applied it to every detail of the daily life and work in the convent.

She had also the habit of always beginning her letters with some thought or text from the Bible, and she loved to seek in it the pattern of Christian life. In every event she traced the hand of God overruling men and circumstances. Nothing but sin disturbed or caused any variation in her habitually joyful earnestness. Her cheerfulness communicated itself to those about her, and made them gay too—a precious gift in this world of constant fret.

The novices were animated by her spirit. When a new postulant came, they all wanted to give her their place and bed, and take an inferior one themselves.

Side by side with all the poverty and difficulties which surrounded these early days of the Good Shepherd, was to be found extraordinary spiritual life—a special grace which often accompanies early beginnings. When God calls a soul to some great work,

He blesses it at first with supernatural graces, that spread abroad to soften hearts and smooth away difficulties. Therefore servants of God love to recall the early days of the work with which they are associated, that they may steep their mind in its true spirit. Even in the merely natural order, an artist is never so pleased with his work as when first the ideal possesses him, and he sees and rejoices in it. The ideal of every work is to be found in the initial stage of it, to which reference must be continually made if vigour and youth are to be perpetuated. That first year of labour at Angers was always Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's ideal for the Good Shepherd, and one to which she constantly recurred. The sap flowed abundantly in the tree so lately planted at Angers, with so much fatigue, but also with much courage.

At first the growth of the Penitents' class was slow and difficult, a great cross for the Mother, whose zeal was always demanding more scope for exertion. The first penitents, moreover, had no tradition of conduct or spirit to follow, such as existed, and later were so unsubmissive to rule, so unsteady at work, that there was plenty of room for the exercise of patience and diligence on the Mother's part.

But it seemed impossible to withstand her ascendency or resist her exhortations, which were always persuasive, full of imagery, and burning with the love of God. She had great oratorical capacity, warmth of sentiment, facility of expression, and an animated countenance. A vivid memory of her spiritual discourses

rested in the minds of those who heard them, and some have been published to preserve her spirit in the Institute.

Mgr. Montault, in response to the wishes of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and M. de Neuville, had appointed a chaplain to the Good Shepherd the first year, the Abbé Perché, afterwards Bishop of New Orleans. Thirty years later the Good Shepherd was established in his episcopal city, and some of the religious remembered that their chaplain in former days had told them he and they should meet at the missions in the New World. The prediction was fulfilled. He became one of the most active missionaries in the United States, and lived to see the Congregation of the Good Shepherd scattered all over America. He it was who gave the novices their first lessons in plain chant, and formed the modest choir which first sang the office at the Good Shepherd.

There was great lack of temporal things in those early days, but abundance of hope and joy of heart. Pious people who visited the house shared in this hopefulness. Father Gloriot, S.J., who came to say Mass for the Community, preached them a sermon, in which he spoke these words with prophetic accents: "And thou art a little one among the tribes of Juda, but out of thee shall come many branches, and they shall cover the earth. Little tribe of the Good Shepherd, so poor, so lowly, so unnoticed, you shall one day be the Church's glory! May these, my words, be fulfilled."

But in those early days the Good Shepherd was much indebted to the piety of founders. M. de Neuville seemed not to know how to do enough to help Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to carry out her beautiful designs. His tender devotion to our Blessed Lady induced him to put all their common enterprises under her protection, and, in the same spirit, he founded four Masses a month for the following intentions: on the 2nd to honour the humility of our Blessed Lady; on the 15th, in thanksgiving for her coronation; one day at choice for the Magdalens, in honour of Mary seeking Jesus; on the 21st, for the orphans, in honour of Mary's childhood.

It was impossible that a work surrounded with so many spiritual benedictions, and begun with such pure intentions, should fail to produce supernatural fruits. It belongs to the character of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, that work placed under her protection, and undertaken in her honour, should become easy and pleasant. Work done under a mother's eye is a pleasure rather than a toil.

It was a great joy to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, at the close of the first year after she returned to Angers as Superioress, that Mme. Cesbron de la Roche, asked to be admitted to the Community. Her natural qualities, connections, and fortune would all be valuable to the house. She was the daughter of M. Milscent, and had been a widow twenty-nine years when she came to the Good Shepherd, December 19, 1831. It had long been her desire to enter religion, and she

had paid several visits to the Sisters Hospitalier at Beaufort. But God, who meant her for the Good Shepherd, allowed family difficulties and lawsuits to arise. These obstacles all disappeared, however, when she was introduced to the Good Shepherd, to which she felt the strongest attraction.

Her father had been one of the Constitutional deputies, and also Mayor of Angers and President of the Chamber, and she had received a brilliant education. She had seen much division in her family, for neither her mother nor her aunt, who had formerly been a nun of the Visitation, could accept her father's revolutionary principles. Her daughter, the wife of M. Pourdet de Sevret, had died, leaving one little girl, Mlle. Elizabeth, afterwards Countess Emmanuel de las Cases. This child often came to the Good Shepherd to see her grandmother, as permission had been obtained for her to spend a day every week there, that she might have the benefit of her guidance.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia chose the name of Sister Mary of St. Chantal de Jesus for the new novice, and the very day after her clothing, she was given the charge of procuratrix, on account of her talent for administration. She was as submissive to authority as a little child, and by her fortune and experience was a great help in organising the monastery.

Everything was still in a state of neglect. The walls round the garden were so insecure, that for several months the nuns were subject to nocturnal

incursion and depredation, and also to insult from a band of worthless men in the pay of the party inimical to religion. The mother had often to reassure her frightened little flock, and to real danger was added the fear of imagination. Now it was a sister who had seen men hidden under the trees in the evening, or a Magdalen from some place of observation had heard steps and threatening voices. Fear was unknown to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and her courage reacted on the rest. She sent for the *procureur du roi*, and by this measure safety and confidence were restored.

But her courage was to be still more put to the test. Through sickness, the various classes in the house were deprived of their mistresses. The Mother herself was very unwell, but managed nevertheless to travel to Nantes to seek help at the Refuge there; subjects were, however, so scarce that none could be spared to return with her. Then she tried Tours, but with the same result. After these vain efforts, she chose from the novices those most capable, and put one at the head of each class, the novice chosen for the Penitents was Sister Mary of St. Vincent de Paul Cornet, whose enlightened zeal and inexhaustible devotedness made her a very valuable auxiliary to the foundation.

The whole community felt the loss of their chaplain, M. Perché, who was made curé of the parish of Mûrs before he left France for foreign missions. To the mother especially he was a great loss, and she had often recourse to his aid afterwards with regard to the erection of the Generalat. He was one of the most

valued supporters of the Congregation, to which he always remained sincerely attached. He foresaw that the Good Shepherd would be a valuable auxiliary in the foreign missions. He told one of his parishioners at Mûrs, a lady of eminent piety, that she would go to the Good Shepherd, and one day meet him in America. She did go to the Good Shepherd, and was sent to Louisville to found a house. Her name was Mlle. Porché—in religion, Sister Mary of the Angels.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia told her friend, Mme. d'Andigné, of her grief at the abbé's departure, and that lady asked Mgr. Montault to appoint in his place a saintly ecclesiastic of her acquaintance, M. Mainguy. This zealous priest, brought thus into contact with souls so devoted to God, was led to desire for himself a more perfect life, a desire he afterwards carried into execution. He entered the Society of Jesus, and being sent to America, dedicated his priestly labours to the work of the missions there. In after years he had the pleasure of meeting the sisters of the Good Shepherd again at Montreal. Zeal is like an ardent flame which sets fire to everything within its reach. That both the first chaplains of the Good Shepherd became missionaries is not to be wondered at. The spectacle of so many virtues in action, of such a wealth of grace, would naturally stir an upright soul to devotion. How would it be possible to direct religious absorbed in the one desire for God's glory in the salvation of souls, without rising oneself to the higher degrees of

perfection? As mountain air strengthens the body, so does work in the saintly atmosphere of a convent, where head and members live under Divine guidance and inspiration, sanctify the soul.

In 1832, through M. de Neuville's generosity, the highest point to which the prayers and wishes of the Mother were directed was attained. From the beginning of the Good Shepherd, it had been her wish to build a church worthy of the community, and adapted to its various classes; and when, by economising, he had saved enough money, he came to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and gave it to her for that purpose. It was joyfully accepted, and she and the other religious and novices forthwith set to work to dig out stones to build with. Zeal for the house of God excited and sustained them. Had any spectator seen them in their pious eagerness, joyfully working, spade and pick in hand, he must have been struck with admiration. The thought of God's presence, and the longing to build for Him a house, gave them strength for the work.

The blessing of the first stone was celebrated at a great feast by the community. Mgr. Montault presided, assisted by M. Montalant, M. Prieur, and friends of the house. The stone was laid by M. de Neuville, and blessed by Mgr. Montault. The architect Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia chose, M. Desnoyers, was a clever man, and as good and charitable as he was clever. He always remained devotedly attached to the Good Shepherd and to the diocese, and at his

death he bequeathed his fortune to the latter. The document of the blessing of the first stone was signed by the following friends of the house, all belonging to the *noblesse*—M. de Neuville, Mme. d'Andigné de Villequier, Mme. de la Potherie, Mme. de Villebois, M. Gontard de Candé, and M. de Boutigny.

The Good Shepherd, poor as the Holy Family at Nazareth, found in M. de Neuville a father to supply their temporal wants. Besides the 26,500 francs he gave for the church, he every day sent food for the meals, and was always inventing new ways of helping his beloved community. He liked making little foundations, which afterwards he looked upon as debts, and paid scrupulously. In this manner he gave thirty pints of milk (three francs) to the Magdalens, and the same to the Penitents, every week. This he called "Our Lady's little income." He visited the community every Thursday. They called him their "good father." He seldom came without bringing a gift, some little pious offering, or books which became the nucleus of a library. Every day he sent his servant Louis to ask what the community wanted; and this servant, who was a very good man, so perfectly understood him that he always transacted the business trusted to him with charity and discretion. When he paid his own weekly visit, M. de Neuville used always to ask if any postulants or penitents had arrived, and he would send beds and blankets for new postulants. If he heard that any of the sisters were sick, he sent medicine or nourishing food. If

there were any exceptional recreation, he took care to enhance its enjoyment by sending some present.

The mother received all his gifts and attentions with a gratitude so frank and hearty that there seemed to be a holy emulation between the two founders in the construction of their great work. The gratitude of the one excited the generosity of the other.

M. de Neuville was a friend of Dom Augustin de Lestrange, abbot of La Trappe, and he gave large alms to the Trappistine nuns of the Convent des Gardes; but it was upon the Good Shepherd that he chiefly lavished his bounty, the work he and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia were chosen by God to found together.

The Good Shepherd used to make the feast of his holy patron, St. Augustine, a feast day for the whole community. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia composed a pious poem for it, which was filled with expressions of the warmest gratitude.

In those early days of the Community, she gave much time and thought to the Novitiate, for upon it depended the future of the Institute. She liked it to be as full as possible, and received postulants without dowry, provided their vocation had been seriously tested and they had a good will. Gold and silver were of small account to her in comparison with zeal for souls. Her daughters used afterwards to love to say, that without money or learning they had achieved the spiritual conquest of the world.

She was anxious, above all things, that the spirit of humility should prevail in the Novitiate. She constantly spoke to the novices of the love of the hidden life. "Our one ambition should be," she told them, "to be known only of God. Hide yourselves from the sight of creatures, for the religious who likes to show herself off deserves nothing but contempt." Noticing one day that a novice to whom she had addressed some slight reproof seemed rather sullen, she wrote her the following note: "To our dear Sister Mary of ——, novice of Our Lady of Charity—You are weak, my dear sister, and very volatile; you cannot bear a deserved humiliation—your self-love rises and rebels as you listen to it. Oh, my child, how long will you resist the Lord? Think over this and reflect upon it when alone with Him." The novice acknowledged that she had been wrong, begged to be pardoned, and recovered her serenity.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia set the greatest value on the practice of religious silence in the Novitiate. She imposed certain small mortifications on novices who failed in it, for she thought that calm and detachment from the world help the soul to converse with God. She made each novice daily recite a page of either the Directory or the Exercises. But she was far from liking silence and recollectedness to turn into melancholy. Like St. Theresa, who was her model in doctrine and example, she disliked to see an unhappy dull spirit among her daughters, and at recreation she always found something to say that made

them cheerful while it edified them. She was perfectly content when she saw every one happy.

The novices were delighted to have her in their midst. It was like a family with its interchange of filial affection and maternal love. It would be hard to say whether Mother or daughters were the happiest.

CHAPTER VIII

FIRST IDEA OF THE GENERALAT, 1832–1833

Mother Pelletier's presentiments with regard to the monastery at Angers—And the Generalat—Mgr. Montault—Opposition—Trials—House at Mans—Consecration of the Church—Preservation class—Mgr. de Montblanc's opposition to the Refuge—End of the storm.

God prepares the way for a great work by the preparation of those who are to take part in it. He inclines their wills; He gives dispositions so secret as often to be almost unknown to themselves, but which are nevertheless the motive power which conduces to the fulfilment of His plan.

Without any knowledge of the future awaiting the house at Angers, from the first Mother Pelletier loved it. Everything connected with it attracted her, even its poverty.

Towards the close of her triennial at Tours, she was constantly thinking of it and its fortunes, with a conviction that there some great work, at the cost of many sacrifices and troubles, awaited her. "You ask me," she wrote to Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus, First Assistant, "if I have any feeling that I shall return to Angers. Oh, yes; the foundation is dear to me, yes, and even dearer than I can express. But, what

opposition from all! You must pray, dear sister, if things seem to you as they do to me. I wish it were over: we suffer on all sides. All here are united in desiring nothing but what God wills, but His will is presented to us accompanied by many crosses and much sacrifice."

Had the attraction she felt to Angers been merely human, it would have been so much the more astonishing, as at Tours she was living peacefully in a well-established convent, in which prevailed order and all that constitutes human tranquillity. "This house," she wrote from Tours, to Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus, "is very flourishing: subjects excellent, establishments well kept up, temporal affairs in good order, great regularity, well selected lay sisters." But her mind always goes back to Angers: "I feel within me that God's designs have not yet been fulfilled; but the sight of my own sins, our many troubles, and all I am told, makes me feel frightened and overwhelmed. Pray for me, dear sister, that this martyrdom may pass. God only, and I alone with Him."

To her the Good Shepherd at Angers was a place chosen by God for a great work, and the difficulties of all sorts which arose about her, from the very first, far from weakening her courage, only increased it. From a distance the difficulties seemed even greater than they really were, but nothing could destroy in her the sure hope that the day was to come when God's designs would see their fulfilment.

"Oh, foundation of Angers," she wrote to Mother

Mary of St. Stanislaus, "how many tears you have cost! but the more we suffer, the more is God glorified, and that thought, which is the teaching of faith, is enough to calm the deepest grief. You ask me, dear sister, to write freely to you from my heart; but my heart is so poor and so sorrowful that its only language should be silence. Still, since you too desire to have no happiness, save at the foot of the Cross, let us talk to one another there. Your sorrows ought to carry you to God and to Him only. One must know this, but it is of no use only to know it, or even to meditate upon it: it is a science learnt only by having the cross to bear. What is man, his favour, or his consolations, or his constancy, or his satisfactions? When experience has taught the soul to answer these questions truly, it has no other attraction than to discard everything that is not God, and to withdraw from creatures who so often have nothing to offer but blame, forgetfulness, and deception. But all this is God's merciful way of dealing with us. He is jealous of our affections, and these are the means He uses, painful to us as they must be, of drawing our hearts to Himself."

These Christian reflections on suffering, its efficacy in detaching souls from creatures and attaching them to God, which is the function it fulfils in His providential plan, permeated her life. When she had been withdrawn from Angers, to complete her term of office as Superioress at Tours, they had supported her, and at Angers, in the struggle with poverty, at the beginning of her Superiority, they had upheld her. The

path by which she advanced to achieve the supernatural task intrusted to her was strewn with trials, but God willed that the work should be accomplished, and by her, as a chosen instrument.

The foundation continued to grow and develop, as it had done through her zeal, under God's blessing, from the first. But there was more for her to do.

Each house of the Refuge is independent of all the rest; the field of its labour is restricted to the town where it happens to be established. But this was not enough to satisfy Mother Pelletier's apostolic spirit: she desired that the benefits of the Institute should embrace the whole world.

Our Divine Lord inspired her with the idea of enlarging the house, and transforming it into a nursery for missionary religious, to be sent out to all lands, in order to benefit those most alienated from religious privileges; and this idea took shape in the erection of a Generalat. The order was to be recognised at Rome, and to have a large novitiate, whence should issue and spread over the face of the earth multitudes of religious. In other words, it was endowing the order to which she belonged with a constitution of proved utility, similar to that of the Jesuits, Capuchins, Dominicans, Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul—of all the great religious orders—the perfect concord of whose corporate unity has been the source of such productiveness and power in the past.

That the life of the Good Shepherd should circulate through diverse branches, joined to the tree which she

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was planting at Angers, was the beautiful idea entertained by this servant of God.

She wished for the Generalat, chiefly because she felt a Divine impulse to promote it. While she prayed in the chapel, she often felt it would conduce to the glory of God, and she also saw clearly that it was the only way of carrying out her idea of spreading the Good Shepherd over the whole world.

The life of a community does not consist in the events occurring in every isolated house, but in all the houses together, which form one body and have one soul. The strength of the tree may be measured by the force with which the sap runs in its veins. The zeal of one house acts as an incentive to the sister houses. They compete, as it were, with one another in striving to fulfil the ideal laid down in their rule. Should fervour grow lukewarm in one house, the timely visit of the Mother-General restores it. The success of one house becomes the success of all, and compensates for an occasional failure here and there. Those who belong to a prosperous society do not lose courage in their own particular trials: petty worries are forgotten in the common glory. Then there is the precious balm of mutual sympathy in trouble between the brothers and sisters, and in a large community this stock of sympathy for the suffering members is inexhaustible. Tears are soon dried when many hands help to wipe them away.

But it is, above all, in the distribution of subjects that the advantages of the Generalat are most

conspicuous. A great mother community, controlling various houses, is able to distribute the sisters according to their taste, attraction, or character. The sister who has an attraction to foreign missions, and appears to have the right qualifications, is sent aboard; another loves retirement, and a suitable position is given to her; or a superioress has to be chosen for one of the houses, and at the mother house, one competent for the charge will probably be easy to find.

Such were some of the considerations by which Mother Pelletier was fortified in the pursuance of her plan. She spoke of it first to M. Perché, the chaplain, who approved, and forthwith communicated it to Mgr. Montault. This holy prelate was not only a most prudent man, but he desired nothing but that God might in all things be glorified. He had seen the marvellous growth of the Good Shepherd, and was aware of the stability of its benefactors, and he came to the conclusion that the good work begun might, by the erection of a Generalat, be infinitely extended, and that it would not entail responsibilities in excess of the resources. He therefore agreed to write to Rome. Meantime there arrived at Angers Father Vaures, a conventual Minor, who held the appointment of Penitentiary for the French language at St. Peter's, Rome, and he cordially espoused the cause.

No great foundation was ever made without many contradictions and crosses, and the heaviest cross that Mother Euphrasia had to bear came from the other houses of the Refuge. Her large-minded and divinely

inspired scheme was totally misapprehended, and the cry of heresy and schism was raised.

But when God calls and the Church approves opposition is in vain. Father Eudes would have given the Generalat his sanction, if he had lived in the nineteenth century, and would have seen in it the best method for propagating the benefits of the Institute and saving souls.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who always trusted her daughters and was very open with them, laid before them the plan which God had inspired her to develop. Her ardent longing for the salvation of souls infected them, and soon their enthusiasm knew no bounds. At recreation, the younger professed sisters and the sister novices used to gather round her and converse with her about the extension of the Order. Many projects were thus discussed, and, among them, foundations in America, while none suspected how speedily the dream was to be realised.

The Mother continually sought counsel of God, praying for light in erecting the Generalat. She also made the community pray for the following intentions :—

1. That she might know whether the idea of the Generalat was from God.

2. That good subjects might come to sustain the house.

For these intentions the Community promised to sing the *Inviolata* for two years, and to go to Holy Communion for fifteen consecutive Saturdays. Besides

which, several professed sisters and novices asked leave to undertake certain acts of corporal mortification.

To promote her great purpose, Mgr. Montault, pending the answer from Rome, gave the necessary permissions for the Good Shepherd to send out foundations wherever they might be asked for, and added to the Constitutions the following articles necessary to meet the growth of the Community :—

1. As union gives strength, in order that the work may be carried on with the more zeal and success, and the glory of God the more widely recognised, all houses that shall be founded from the house at Angers shall depend on and mutually support each other.

2. The novices shall be trained at this house that they may acquire its spirit.

3. If, at any time, for reasonable cause, a subject should desire to return to the Mother house, she shall be free to do so.

At that time Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had no direct superior but Mgr. Montault, the Bishop of Angers, and she heartily thanked God for bestowing on her, in him who was so wise and so pious, the support and authority necessary to make foundations in other dioceses.

But from the very outset, trials and crosses were sent to consolidate from the very first her great plans.

Those she felt most came, as we have said, from within. Three of the six religious who had come from Tours with her were opposed to the Generalat, and returned thither. This was a great sorrow to

her, but the three who accepted it did much to comfort her by their life-long devotion to her person and works. These were Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet, Sister Mary of St. Philip Mercier, and Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross David.

The time had now come for the Good Shepherd to begin sending out colonies, in obedience to the Divine mandate.

From Le Mans, Mgr. Carron, Bishop, and M. Moreau, Director of the Great Seminary, wrote for a foundation, and Mother Pelletier, with the authorisation of her Superior, Mgr. Montault, started for Le Mans on the 9th February 1833, accompanied by M. Mainguy, the Community chaplain, to visit the house offered, and see the Bishop.

The journey at that time was long and difficult; but the Mother heeded no difficulty when the interests of the Community were at stake.

When she returned, after having made the necessary preliminary arrangements, Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus, Sister-Assistant at Angers, was sent to Le Mans. She started, April 18th, accompanied by two choir nuns and a lay sister, to prepare the house.

On the 29th of the same month, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia paid another visit to Le Mans to install the Superioress and her companions. She came back, bringing with her a postulant, and shortly afterwards several other young girls from the diocese of Le Mans followed.

The Mother always loved this first foundation as an

eldest daughter. She was very solicitous for its welfare, constantly writing for and receiving news of the installation, the blessing of the choir, the establishment of the enclosure by Mgr. Carron, the charity of benefactors. These were M. de St. Martin, Mme. de la Potherie, Mme. de la Gasserie, Mlle. Ducouteau.

The sisters, on their part, sent very touching details of their "little Bethlehem," as they called it.

But only a few months had elapsed when an attempt was made to separate the new foundation from the house at Angers, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia found herself in the midst of intrigues which caused her the greatest distress.

A year later, the letters she wrote to the Superioress at Grenoble were filled with her anxiety. Writing to her, 21st April 1834, she says—

"My God! Thy will be done and not mine. Ah! my beloved daughter, how anxious I am about your charities. Did nothing happen to you when so many misfortunes occurred in your towns? What days of crosses, and how we have all suffered! God took care of us, for if our sisters had started they would have perished. What has become of our house at Lyons? has it had much to suffer? If this reach you, answer at once. I hope it may soon be quiet enough for our sisters to leave us: they are quite ready—eager, I think, to go. May they reach you in safety, you to whom we confide all our secrets. How many trials we have had! Our neighbours wrote again to St. Brieuc and Toulouse, and got them to write here against us. Alas!

what harm have I done them? I only desired their happiness. If you could understand the troubles we have had for the last fortnight, you would be much grieved. This is only for yourself, my daughter: the gentleman at Mans, of whom you know, has taken the same side, and is doing his best to turn away him who was so pleased at first with everything. Try and find out who the two prelates are who have been consulted, and their names. Please do this discreetly, and you will be rendering us a great service. Present our very respectful thanks to your chaplain. If he could only come here he would find a cordial welcome, for we are very grateful to him. Give our respectful regards also to M. Teston. Our sisters are hoping soon to start. We saw a gentleman yesterday who promised to get us passes in about a fortnight.

"Mgr. de Grenoble saw how ardent was our desire. How much cause we have to be grateful and submissive to him. All you asked for shall be sent: a novice to teach writing, and all the little things besides that you want. Oh, my dear beloved daughter, believe me, we truly belong more to you than to ourselves. How dear to me is your affection! We beseech the Lord to overwhelm with His graces and blessings, and to uphold you. Ah! be the ornament and glory of the Generalat. Happily no one could complain of any irregularity in your dear house, and your Bishop being satisfied, it was useless to attack him in that quarter. Here things really are going on in perfection. Thanks to God, the Novitiate seems more

regular than ever. Sister Mary of St. Joseph is better, and sacrifices herself utterly to do all she can for us, and so does Sister Mary of St. Cyr. The novices are increasing in number. Sister Mary of St. Theodore is delightful. Every one loves you, and wishes they could tell you so. Sister Mary of the Good Shepherd is to write to you in the name of all. Good-bye, my beloved daughter.—In union with the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and with sincere affection, I am your devoted, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

"God be blessed. What joy the post brought me to-day! You have arrived, my daughter! How much your letter pleases me! It has come on the 21st. We have had no misfortunes, thank God! He has preserved us. How wrong we should have been to let them go in such terrible weather: they would have perished on the way. You see, my child, that the Lord watches over us. How much I love that dear lady! thank her for us—how good she is. Oh yes! do give your curé vegetables, strawberries, fruit: we like you to do it. Why did not our sisters leave? How much pain they give me! but I pardon them with my whole heart. To complete our cross, the Abbé Dufêtre is coming to Angers in a few weeks. But God is present, and in Him is all our confidence. Don't neglect your postulants, and send us two or three. Let us do battle, and be brave in the Lord, my daughter."

It was not only at Mans that there was an effort

made to break the connection with the Good Shepherd, but at all the convents which were successively founded from Angers. That at Grenoble especially was the object of attack from the adversaries of the Generalat. Mother Pelletier defended it with all the energy of a mother's devotedness. She wrote letter after letter to her daughters at Grenoble, tender outpourings of affection, wise advice, and edifying acts of submission to the will of God. On 22nd May 1834, she wrote to them—

"'My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' Oh, how much it has pained me to delay so long in answering your dear letters, which have nevertheless greatly cemforted me! The journey to Poitiers overwhelmed me. I cannot express to you the joy that the details of your letter gives me, dear Sisters Mary of St. Louis and Mary of St. Helena. Ah! persevere in your sentiments, and God will do great things through you: you shall be the joy and glory of our Israel. I have felt for you in everything. Sister Mary of the Good Shepherd will have told you all about the progress of the Generalat. When we know more you shall hear; and very soon, however busy, we shall write a little answer to each one, to our good Sister Mary de Bonne Croix, to our little daughter, Mary of St. Radegonde. The latter is our spoiled child: we embrace her and all our beloved sisters at Grenoble.

"But now let us, for the glory of God, my dear Mary of St. Louis, treat of our great affairs. Our

sisters and I like your idea very much. About selling the land, don't be in a hurry; perhaps God may help us not to sell it all, and that would be best. Yes! a thousand francs interest can be had. If you have little orphans or boarders, you might make the interest yearly. If we were better off, we would not keep the money back; but we have none, and we are really hard pressed. Yes, hire a gardener at 200 francs. I can assure you it will soon pay you.

"Good M. Teston's letter was a great comfort to me. How kind he is, and how devoted to the work! And his sermon, how good of you to send it to us. Your mayor is kind, but that Carthusian monk of yours is as cold as his own mountains! I could not help laughing about it. Did he give you the crucifix and the statues of our Blessed Lady? At any rate, all the incidents you tell me of bring home to me the nearness of God, and make me bless Him for His mercies. Poor dear Mary of St. Helen. I know what a good heart you have. I approve of all you tell me of yourself. Yes, my daughter, be humble, silent, dignified, and you will be respected by every one, as we hear you are already. Oh, what a great consolation the Bishop of Angers has experienced. We pray for Le Mans, but we shall be firm and trust to God's goodness. We think as you do, my beloved sisters, and have refused the two novices until his lordship comes to Angers on the 18th June. We think it better to risk all for the possibility of gaining all. What do you think about it? It is better to lose one

house than perhaps a dozen; and I think, moreover, they will not go quite so far as that; but they want to frighten us. God is our strength: what have we to fear? He will find us foundations.

"Our dear sisters from Mans are in the very best possible dispositions, but alas! they have allowed others to get complete mastery over them. Oh, how dangerous that is! Better to suffer, and soon our holy work will triumph.

"And you, my dear Mary of St. Louis, how are you? Poor dear child! how much you have suffered! Our zealous Superioress at Poitiers is also in very bad health. It is a great pity, for the house was going on perfectly, and was quite one with the spirit of the Generalat. They all spoke of it in the same way to me, and the foundation there is an admirable one. Postulants are beginning to make their appearance: we have three now, but what is that for such an abundant harvest? But, after all, the Divine Father of our family knows our great need—let us cast all our anxieties on Him, and He will take care of us. Let us be humble, but without weakness, and united to God by prayer. Ah! my dear daughters, let holy regularity, union, and an interior spirit reign among you. Our sisters are so good. We love you all in the love of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.—Your devoted, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Her maternal joy was about to be disturbed. Her fears were realised. At the close of this year (1834),

the Community at Mans repudiated Mgr. Montault's supplementary articles, and resolved to separate from the house at Angers, and be independent, like the other houses of the Refuge. Six of the nuns came back to Angers, and did what they could to console the Mother in a trial which she felt very keenly. However, most of the postulants, who had come from the diocese of Mans, adhered to their original intention, and remained under Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's government at Angers.

All this time the building of the Church at the Good Shepherd was progressing, thanks to the activity of the nuns, for all took some part in the construction of the house of God, where they would make their vows to God and enter upon life-long engagements to His service. The nuns' zeal acted as a stimulus to the workmen, and they lost no time. No regretable accidents occurred among them. Sometimes they might be heard repeating the hymns the Good Shepherd children sang, their voices softened and purified by the sound of the young voices trained by the religious.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's first idea was to have a choir large enough for forty persons. To this, however, M. de Neuville had an objection to suggest. "Madame," said he, "yours is no ordinary work. It will increase, and you will have more than 300 religious"—words afterwards verified to the letter. His advice was followed. The church is cruciform. The choir, 76 feet long by 28 wide, formed the top

Dubut, phot., Angers.

Comtesse d'Andigné de Villequier.

of the cross; the right arm, the Magdalens' choir; the left, the Penitents' chapel. Large tribunes were constructed for the orphans. A beautiful marble altar was placed in the sanctuary, so that the priest might be seen by all the various sections of the community.

On the 11th April 1833, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had the church bell baptized by the Abbé Mainguy. The god-mother was Sister Mary of St. Chantal of Jesus; the god-father, M. Desnoyers, architect of the church. It was given the names of St. Euphrasia and Mary Chantal of Jesus.

On the 14th May following, Mgr. Montault, surrounded by a numerous body of clergy, came to bless the new church, which was placed under the title of the Assumption. For the occasion, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia composed a hymn full of grateful loving piety towards our Lord, to express the joy of the whole Community at His taking up His abode as Master in the house built for Him.

M. de Neuville and Mme. d'Andigné vied with the Mother in enriching the church and altar. M. de Neuville gave a silver monstrance, a handsome missal, and richly framed altar cards. A month afterwards, on the eve of St. Augustine's day, his patron saint, he gave money to buy a ciborium and veil for the Blessed Sacrament. Mme. d'Andigné gave candlesticks, a crucifix, a carpet for the sanctuary, and a lamp for the altar. Mother Mary of St. Chantal de Jesus gave two valuable dalmatics. M. Desnoyers, the architect, gave his services as his contribution, and would accept no emolument.

But while so keenly interested in building the church, Mother Pelletier's zeal for the development of the classes by no means slackened. In that same year (1833), with the consent of her chapter and the authorisation of Mgr. Montalant, the Vicar-general, as Superior of the house, she began another work, called the Preservation class. It was for the lambs of the fold. People brought to the house innocent children, who, either owing to poverty or some other cause, were homeless. The Mother thought it undesirable for these little ones to associate with the older children, some of whom were far from innocent. A place in the Community was therefore assigned to them, and their plan of life and various exercises so organised that they should never come into contact with the older class. In the chapel they have their own tribune, and also their own separate house inside the enclosure, where they live and are directed by sisters appointed exclusively to the task. Even the parlour, where they see their relations, is separated from the other parlours. This division is an important safeguard to all the classes.

But whilst everything seemed to be prospering at Angers, the storm from without became every day more threatening. Great anxiety was felt at Tours, where it was feared the Institute was in danger of changes which had their origin in a desire to acquire power for one house over all the others.

Mgr. Montblanc and his Vicar-general, M. Dufêtre, Superior of the Refuge, were both prejudiced against

Angers. They thought grave error had found its way into the house, and that its progress could only be arrested by recalling Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to Tours.

When this was announced at the Good Shepherd, as may readily be supposed, it created the greatest consternation—it was depriving the house of its founder and actual mainstay. However, calm was restored when the act of obedience, signed by Mgr. de Montblanc, under which the Mother had come to Angers, was produced and read over. It gave her leave of absence from Tours, without limit as to time; it also released her from obedience to the Bishop of that diocese and put her under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Angers; and when reference was made to the latter, he comforted the Community by the assurance that he alone was their lawful superior.

But in spite of all this, in the month of July, Mgr. de Montblanc himself visited Angers to assert his claims. He was received with great courtesy and hospitality by Mgr. Montault, and with the respect due from a diocesan to his metropolitan. They visited the Good Shepherd together, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia received him with marked homage, but refused to hear what he had come to say about his claims, except in presence of her diocesan and the chapter of her community. He then began to reproach her, repeating to her all the accusations against her which were being circulated.

She listened in perfect silence until he had quite finished, and then, having asked his leave to answer,

laid simply before him the facts as they really were. The Archbishop asked again for a private interview, but the Mother, who looked to Mgr. Montault for help and counsel, refused, as before, to leave his presence. Her firmness, joined to great humility and sweetness, so impressed Mgr. Montault that his esteem for her was much augmented by that day's experience.

The Archbishop of Tours still insisted that the Mother should return to the Refuge, and then, as a last resort, the act of obedience, signed by himself, in which he placed the Mother under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Angers, was produced and shown to him. Then, to close a scene which had become very painful, Mgr. Montault, of whose piety and deep humility we have already more than once spoken, threw himself on his knees at the Archbishop's feet, who, greatly moved, quickly raised him from the ground and embraced him, and the storm was dispersed.

So far as mere natural feeling was concerned, the Mother was keenly susceptible to this painful though well-meant opposition to her Community, but not for an instant was her confidence in the Institute shaken, and, alike in joy and sorrow, she remained unalterable in her vocation. The trials which were permitted to beset her path she looked upon only as so many proofs of the excellence of the work.

On the 10th of August, Mgr. Fustier, Vicar-general of Tours, wrote to comfort her, and confirm her in her great design: "After having read over the Obedience you received on the 20th May 1831, we, that is M.

Dugier[1] and myself, are of opinion from its tenor that your conscience may be at rest, that Mgr., your worthy Bishop, is acting within his rights in keeping you."

This judgment, emanating from the Archbishop's house of Tours itself, must have sufficed to calm the Mother's mind had any cloud of doubt remained to trouble it, and would have had the same effect on the sisters who were faithful to her. Hers was a nature that always seemed to gain strength in time of difficulty. Where a weaker nature would have yielded to the force of circumstances, all she needed with her strong spirit of faith and purity of intention to give her courage, was to feel herself entirely guided by God's inspirations. Then, too, she had Mgr. Montault's warm approbation and advice to confirm her. Shortly after this, she drew up a new Constitution, approved by Mgr. Montault, which was added to the Contumier of the Congregation. By this Constitution, the Superioress and Superior at Angers were recognised as Superiors-general of all the houses they should found. There was to be no Novitiate besides that of the mother house. All the houses were to have community of goods and subjects.

All the professed religious signed this document, awaiting the time when the Holy See should solemnly authorise them to observe it.

The foundations of Poitiers, Grenoble, and Metz were made according to this new Constitution, which also regulated the election of the Superioress in 1834.

[1] M. Dugier was another Vicar-general of Tours.

CHAPTER IX

FIRST PROTECTORS OF THE GENERALAT— CONVENT AT POITIERS, 1833.

Mme. d'Andigné enters the Institute — M. de Neuville — Mgr. Montault and the Generalat—Foundation at Poitiers—Mgr. de Bouille—M. Samoyault—Letters from Mother Pelletier to her daughters—Her visit to Poitiers—Consolation.

It was the will of God that compensation for the many trials of 1833 should be made to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia in a manner very sweet to so loving a heart as hers.

Mme. d'Andigné de Villequier, through whom it had pleased God to make the Institute known at Angers, and who, together with M. de Neuville, had aided and encouraged the foundation, asked to be admitted to the community as lady boarder. Nothing could have seemed more desirable to the Mother and sisters than this arrangement, which would bring under their roof a person devoted to the house of great experience and wise counsel. When, therefore, on the feast of our Lady's Presentation, November 21st, 1833, she entered the Community, thanks were offered to God as for a signal benefit. Her attachment to

the Mother and Institute, and her desire for the advancement of the latter, continually increased.

M. de Neuville's kindness also was unfailing. He was now having cloisters built between the different offices of the Community. He was also having the walls of the house raised where the children of Providence were lodged, and he paid those workmen whose accounts had become overdue. The Good Shepherd more and more became the convent of his predilection. It was his delight to make it "a house of prayer," and to adorn it with statues of the saints. At all the angles of the cloisters he had little altars set up, above which were placed these statues. He never passed our Blessed Lady's altar without uncovering his head in salutation of her whom he called his Lady and his Queen.

God seemed to incline the hearts of His most devoted servants to favour the work. Not that crosses were wanting, but, as the Abbé Perché, then curé of Turquan, wrote to Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet, "Crosses are but the pledge of success in good works. Don't wonder that your Mother, and those who want to help her, have such a heavy load of them. So far they have helped the work rather than hindered it, and it will always be the same."

And in point of fact, notwithstanding obstacles, the Mother went on in the spirit of faith, lavishing her stores of zeal on all who depended on her.

Whilst the Superioress was thus going on with the work intrusted to her, her Bishop was begging the

Holy Father to grant means for the plenitude of its accomplishment. Her petition that the Generalat might be recognised had gone to Rome.

On the 10th June 1833, M. Mainguy, chaplain to the community, wrote thus to Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus at Le Mans:—

"You are well aware of your good Mother's tender solicitude for all her beloved daughters. She is consumed with the desire that you should all be happy and all saints. She never ceases talking to me of her feelings and ideas on this subject, and is continually planning with me how to succeed. God's glory, your sanctification, the conversion of souls, your spiritual and temporal welfare—these, my dear daughters, are the things she continually thinks of and longs for.

"The Bishop of Angers is full of zeal for our success (in the Generalat). Every day his interest becomes greater. On Trinity Sunday he showed me a letter from Rome, announcing to him that his petition had been laid before the Pope, who had referred it to the next meeting of Cardinals. This shows he has taken it into consideration. Yesterday, after the procession of the Blessed Sacrament, he told me he had another letter to show me. But we must expect much delay before the Holy See finally decides.

"Monseigneur takes the whole weight of the affair on himself, and undertakes, when the right time comes, to answer any objections against us that might be raised. His own expression is, that he will answer for us '*as a Bishop.*' He has firmly made up his mind to over-

come all obstacles which may be opposed to this important affair, and he is quite confident of success; so all we have to do is to pray and wait patiently for the accomplishment of God's holy Will. He will never forsake us, and will make all things work together for His glory and our sanctification, if we seek Him alone."

This letter shows that Mgr. Montault had sent his petition to Rome before. As related in the last chapter, the Archbishop came to Angers in July to assert his claims. Mgr. Montault had never for an instant doubted his own rights and powers of jurisdiction over Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her Community, from the terms of the act of Obedience under which she came to Angers in 1831. He therefore made the cause of the Generalat his own. This in itself was very propitious, for the saints are called to found and establish the works of God; and (as we have already said) Mgr. Montault is remembered as a saint in Anjou, where his many acts of humility edified all who knew him.

The Good Shepherd was beginning to be heard of in neighbouring dioceses. Poiters, where Mgr. Montault was born, asked for a foundation. Mgr. Bouillé, the Bishop, wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who lost no time in assembling her chapter; and, after examination of the proposed conditions, the sisters to found the house at Poitiers were immediately nominated. The Mother signed the act of foundation, which is entered in the Chapter Book under date 12th November 1833.

At Poitiers the sisters were hospitably received by the religious of the Sacred Heart, and spent three weeks at their convent. Meantime, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was living in anxiety about the foundation, while it was still in suspense. She wrote touching letters to Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet, showing how deeply she felt for the sisters in the new colony, and how she entered into all their difficulties and all their consolations. She awaited their first letter with impatience. "Ah! my beloved sisters," she wrote to them, "how anxious about you I was. Night and day I am with you, constantly giving you to God, that He may keep you. We think of you and pray for you unceasingly."

On the way to Poitiers, the sisters had encountered armed men, which alarmed them. The Mother, too, in her tenderness for them, shares their fears, and recommends the sister procuratrix to come back by another road, but the shortest possible. She tells her daughters to be very grateful to the Sacred Heart nuns. "We shall never forget them," she says. "Courage, dear daughters! write everything to us—troubles, joys, cares; tell us about the house and good M. Samoyault. A penitent already at Poitiers! poor little sheep! may God bless the religious who sent her to you! I am longing for a letter from you."

The foundation at Poitiers was happy in having for founders and protectors the Bishop and Vicar-general, who were at that time spending themselves in the restoration of Divine worship and discipline in

the diocese. Mgr. Bouillé, called by Mgr. Pie the "Esdras of the church of Poitiers," belonged to a celebrated family, of which one member, the Marquis de Bouillé, had served with distinction in the war against the English.

If Mgr. Bouillé had chosen to remain in the world the way to honour lay open to him, and in the Church he was eminently fitted for the high dignities he attained. At the College of Navarre, where his education was begun before the Revolution, his naturally solid judgment was cultivated, and his grave, dignified, clerical manner was formed at St. Sulpice under wise direction. When the Revolution broke out he was obliged to leave France. He went to Martinique, where he spent twenty years in preaching the Gospel to the negroes. No doubt his own zeal for missions made him take an interest in the Good Shepherd. It had been Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's dream all her life to work among the blacks, because of all men they are most abandoned, and here was a heart ready to enter into and promote her schemes. Exile and suffering had not only ripened Mgr. Bouillé's mind, but they had taught him to sympathise with, and pity misfortune of all kinds, especially such as affected the soul. He had been Bishop of Poitiers fifteen years when Mother Pelletier's connection with him began. He had restored many churches and presbyteries, re-established ecclesiastical discipline, founded in many parishes houses for religious orders devoted to the education of the young, and summoned to

Poitiers the Brothers of Christian Doctrine. He was at that time a handsome old man, with white hair, tall in stature, his carriage dignified but unaffected, and his manners, courteous but easy, at once inspired respect. His speech, clear, simple, and free from laboured ornament, went straight to the mark; his decisions were remarkable for their precision. He had been chaplain to Queen Marie-Antoinette before the Revolution, and to the Duchess d'Angoulême after 1815, and always retained distinction of manner in his intercourse with all who came to him, from the highest to the lowest.

Mother Pelletier recognised in him at once a bishop of great virtue, whose chief solicitude was the salvation of souls. In founding the Good Shepherd, Mgr. Bouillé was aided by his Vicar-general, M. Samoyault, a younger man than himself, but old enough to have witnessed, as a child, some incidents of the sacrilegious persecution and cruel warfare which had devastated the west of France. The first Mass he had ever heard was said by a priest, who risked his life to give the faithful the consolation of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice; and then it was that, for the first time, the idea of the priesthood entered his mind. While he was making his theological studies at St. Sulpice, the Church was undergoing great trials. The Pope was a prisoner; the Sacred College dispersed; Rome in mourning. When he returned to the diocese of Poitiers, he was made, first, Director, then Superior of the Great Seminary, where

he spent thirty years. He was one of those men who seem born to command, and whom others seem to obey instinctively. The inexhaustible fund of his zeal, which was the outcome of his great faith, expended itself in all his ministerial offices, whether for parishes or communities, and the rectitude of his judgments became proverbial. In addition to these qualities, he had a talent for fine repartee, prompted by excellent common-sense, which he always knew how to employ at the right moment.

His warnings, even his reproofs, were never tinged with any bitterness—mere hints, though they were never given by halves.

When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent her daughters to Poitiers, M. Samoyault had just been appointed Vicar-general. He welcomed the foundation with his customary zeal and faith; and during the forty subsequent years that he continued to be Vicar-general, he never varied in devotedness to the religious of the Good Shepherd and their work.

The installation of the convent was made in poverty, and with difficulty, as was the case with most houses of the Order. The first thing was to find a suitable dwelling, a matter so difficult that it led to some discouragement. From Angers meantime came letters from Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to her daughters, overflowing with zeal and tenderness, and inciting them to be of good heart. "They wanted to send you back here," she wrote to the Superioress, on the 19th November. "Oh no, daughter of Calvary,

you do not fear the Cross? If all forsake you, God will remain with you. Your letter, my daughter, pierced my heart; but your courage dries my tears. Oh, stay! stay! Why may we not fly to help you? You will not leave the Cross, which is your glory, and soon victory will come. Try to get a house. You will inconvenience the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and it makes us uncomfortable. Had you been elsewhere, you would have received alms. I will write to M. Samoyault: he is the father God has sent us. My very dear daughter, how much I think of you. Ah! preserve carefully the sacred deposit we have placed in your hands. House of Poitiers, work of zeal and of the Cross! Our hope has sure foundation. You will succeed with our dear sister *économe* to help you. Courage! we have recommenced our novenas for you."

A few days later, she learnt that her daughters, taking courage from her example, had at last hired a house where they would start their great work. "God, my dear sister, greatly helped and inspired you when you took the house suggested. In obeying us, you obeyed Him. You have done His holy will. Go and live there with your little colony. What a joy it will be to us to know that you are in your own monastery, however poor and little it may be. It will be much better for you, and we shall come and visit you. Oh, I beseech you, go to it without any fear. I am quite pleased with the little gift sent you. Yes, everything interests me, my beloved daughter."

But fresh difficulties arose. The daughters wrote to the Mother, and she, with her ever buoyant confidence and dauntless zeal, answered them on the 27th November—"Your griefs, my very honoured sisters, are ours, be assured. It distresses us very much to hear that you did not go immediately to the house suggested by Monseigneur. It is a wound to our heart. St. Theresa says the great secret in a foundation is to take immediate possession. May the Lord watch over you, my very beloved daughters. Your fidelity is known to me. What grief it would cause me if the Poitiers foundation came to nothing! It is God's work—a holy work. We are much distressed. Oh! my daughter, you who have been appointed Superioress, and who have our worthy *économe* to help you, I conjure you to act and to go and live in your house. Our young sisters, and all of us, have prostrated ourselves between the vestibule and the altar. We have made a general Communion, prayed, done all we could. We will do all in our power to make matters easy for you; but, my dear daughter, I charge you, by holy obedience, to begin at once in the house Monseigneur told you of. Ah! do not let the foundation at Poitiers come to naught!"

These letters, burning with zeal, followed one another in quick succession. Yet the Mother was herself all the time overburdened with work and the responsibilities of her vast administration. "I have more to do than I can get through: I have not a moment to spare. It pains me that I cannot write

more at length to you. I have been very suffering for the last three days. I am writing only to you, because I cannot apply myself steadily to anything. It is a feverish attack, the result of over-fatigue."

At length the sisters went to their convent on the feast of St. Francis Xavier. When the good news came to Mother Pelletier, she could not contain herself, so great was the force of her supernatural joy that her daughters should at last have taken possession of the house where they would contribute to the glory of God.

"Very dear and most beloved daughter," she wrote, on the 2nd December, "what wonderful things you tell me in your last letter! How great is God's work, and what lights He has vouchsafed to give you concerning it! O holy feast of the Apostle of the Indies! This day, feast of St. Francis Xavier, will ever remain precious to me, the day you took possession of your house, the day of your triumph in the midst of your labours, the day when your mourning ceased. Our sisters here are all rejoiced, and to-morrow we are to make a general Communion for the dear foundation at Poitiers.

"May the thrice holy God load you with His graces! May He give you wisdom, joy, and souls to save! My very dear daughter, do all that you think for the best. If our good sister procuratrix is necessary to you, and if she wishes to stay another week with you, I will make this further sacrifice, although I am very much overburdened. But if I give all for God's

sake, in Him I shall find all. He has wrought such marvels that none can fail to see that it is His work. We are all struck with admiration, and we cry to each other, 'The finger of God is there.'"

In every letter to her daughters at Poitiers, Mother Pelletier pours out her grateful sentiments to God, the Bishop, and the Vicars-general. She despises her own fatigues and the anxieties which beset her from other quarters. She regards the foundation at Poitiers as most regular: it had been both asked for and established by ecclesiastical authority.

"My very dear and most beloved daughter," she wrote, on the 7th December, "what good your letter does me! Your last letter filled my soul with consolation. We can never be grateful enough to God for His goodness to us. May He bless Monseigneur of Poitiers! He is the deliverer of Israel! He is your Moses, who has brought you to the Promised Land. Nothing could have been such good news to us! The whole house rejoices in it, and it makes other sorrows lighter. Your letter dried our tears. The good Jesus loves you, and you are precious to Him. He has given you the two houses, the furniture, and the rest." Whenever good news comes from Poitiers, where God's goodness was so strikingly and frequently manifested in various ways to the infant community, the tidings were always hailed with the greatest joy.

On the 21st December, she wrote, "What pleasure you have given me, dear daughter! I would have

paid a great deal for your letter. It was received with acts of thanksgiving to God, and with tender love for you. My daughter, you will succeed. This grain of mustard-seed, so small at first, will be a great tree some day. How good Monseigneur and that dear lady have been to you! As for your venerable chaplains and confessors, I think with you that they are treasures."

These letters, overflowing as they do with joy and gratitude, always contain some exhortation to piety. In them she knew how to convey those precious instructions of which she was so lavish in her convent. They are the unrestrained expression of her own interior piety, rather than studied or written sermons.

On Christmas Eve she writes to her daughters at Poitiers: "My very dear, my beloved daughters, He comes to you very sweetly, this Prince of Peace, this God of all consolation. With what joy my heart unites itself with yours, that together we may go out to meet Him. We must come to the crib, my beloved daughters, and there, united, must ask the Holy Child Jesus to make our union holy and indissoluble. This is my heart's wish, the heart that is all yours. I greet and bless the dear Shepherdess and her lambs. What deep peace I feel with regard to this foundation."

After these pious utterances, the Mother sees, as it were, pass before her all her daughters of Poitiers, and for each she has some loving word, some note of encouragement, words coming from her very heart that go straight to their hearts.

"My Dear Child,—It was the will of God that you should go to Poitiers. You will have a great flock there. How you rejoice the heart of Jesus and that of your poor Mother! Courage, my child! You are always present in my thoughts. And our good (Mary of) St. Arsenius, how does she get on at Poitiers? Have you become accustomed to it, my child? Give yourself up to God and your dear flock. I know that, with God's help, you can do much good there. Everything depends on the start. Hold fast both of you to your fold, once it has been begun. I wish our good Mary of the Heart of Mary all sorts of graces too. Let her devote herself zealously, courageously, to the work, doing all she can to help her good Mother, for I fear she is overburdened. We intend to sacrifice ourselves to train helpers for you; but our Lord alone can make our labours fruitful. I go back now to my eldest daughter, who is very dear to me. Mary of the Holy Innocents, how much I think of you, my dear child. It seems to me you suffer much and rejoice much at the sight of God's designs which are being fulfilled. Pray, my daughter, pray, you who are so devoted to me. I will answer your letter. Go to Communion for us: I will go for you. Remember Christmas night last year, and let us love the Cross, and toil, and grief. By these dark paths we shall come to the light. Here there is nothing particularly new—only crosses. They are my life. Some are very crucifying to nature and that is a good sign."

The day but one after Christmas she hastened to tell her dear daughters at Poitiers of the consolations vouchsafed to her at the Crib, where she had told them to meet her: "My very dear sisters, He has appeared in our midst, who shall deliver Israel, and already we feel the sweetness of His coming. We prayed for you at the Crib more earnestly than words can tell. May the Divine Child have granted our desires. I almost think it is so when I read your letters: their tone is so happy. I said to myself, 'My daughters are the daughters of the child Jesus.' How glad I was! First of all, the Superior's letter was so cordial! My daughters, believe me, your wish to comfort me will be rewarded: God will comfort you."

By letters, by her affectionate interest in each of her daughters, Mother Pelletier lived in all her convents. She was everywhere the soul which animated and directed all the members. In the new house at Poitiers she continually dwelt in thought, and her presence seemed to rule the infant Community, which, under the Bishop's protection, was thriving.

Cardinal Pie, in his *Œuvres*, speaks of the Foundation of the Good Shepherd as one of the glories of Mgr. Bouillé's episcopate. The most respected of his clergy were associated with him in the work, as friends and patrons of the house. We have already spoken of M. Samoyault. M. de Rochemonteix was also among them. He was a priest of eminent piety, belonging by age to the old French clergy, a school

remarkable for correctness of deportment and customs, and which, after the Revolution, handed down to the younger generation of priests the holy traditions of the past. Another was M. de Larnay, Canon Theologian, who remained all through his life secretary of the committee appointed to watch over the interests of the Good Shepherd.

Six months after the foundation was made, the Mother, eager to see her dear daughters, started for Poitiers, in company with Mme. d'Andigné and the Abbé Mainguy.

The traveller who comes from Angers to Poitou might well imagine he had made a long journey. Leaving the wide and pleasing views of country through which the Loire passes, he finds himself in austere plains, abruptly confined by the narrow valley of the Clain, with its steep hillsides. The white rock at Saumur, which has glittered along the horizon, is replaced by shelly stone of a yellowish tint, or by sombre granite building materials, which make the small towns and villages of Poitou look gloomy.

But at Poitiers itself the impression changes. Winding through the tortuous streets of the old town, which follow the slopes of the Clain, and perpetually ascend and descend, the Christian heart is susceptible of a soothing influence. The streets are almost like a series of cloisters, so filled are they with old and beautiful churches; the houses, too, have the stamp of tranquillity associated with the Middle Ages. One is reminded of the Law Schools, which once were so

flourishing here that students from all parts of France attended them; or still further back into the history of the past, of Hilary and Radegonde, whose sanctuaries still stand to remind the hurried generations of the present day of those great saints, and of the part they took in the civil and religious history of their country.

In this city of convents Mother Pelletier felt at home. Monasteries were rising on the site of those levelled at the Revolution; the different religious orders were reconstructing the ties of charity which bound them in holy brotherhood. Mother Pelletier felt that this soil, blessed by having given birth to many saints, and happy in possessing a clergy devoted and zealous, was one in which the sap of the religious life would never dry up. Here, as in Anjou, the upper class seemed to her pious and devoted to works sanctioned by the Church. A sympathetic circle, under the auspices of the clergy, had already gathered round the religious, and a committee appointed by their benefactors to watch over their interests. The servant of God could not have found a more desirable position for Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet, the new Superioress, her faithful companion since their Novitiate days at Tours.

The Mother stayed several days at Poitiers, inquiring into everything that concerned the house. She also paid a visit to the ladies of the Sacred Heart, to thank them for their hospitality to her daughters. At their convent she met the Rev. Father Barthés,

S.J., who was preaching a retreat. She talked a long time with him about the end of her Institute. This meeting, which had important results in the sequel, was doubtless ordained by Divine Providence.

The house at Poitiers became to Mother Pelletier a source of consolation amid many sorrows. She never wearied of holding it up as a model to others. "Poitiers is doing wonders! it is a work of benediction!" And again, on the 9th February 1834, she writes to the Superior at Grenoble, "What consolation has not God favoured us with of late in the house at Poitiers! Not for 200 years has there been in the Institute such a solemn ceremony for establishing the enclosure as that of Tuesday. It was Monseigneur himself—generous saintly prelate that he is—who would do everything. He was accompanied by a large body of clergy, and all the *noblesse* of Poitiers. There were sentries at the doors. The dear Superioress acts admirably, and every one loves her. Since the great work began, she has grown great herself. She makes the Generalat known with such prudence and straightforwardness that she wins all hearts. How much good she has done the Institute!"

CHAPTER X

FIRST REQUEST FOR THE GENERALAT—GRENOBLE, 1833

Foundation of Grenoble—Poverty of beginnings—Charity of Mother Pelletier for this house—She consoles her daughters—Establishment of the classes — Re-election of Mother Pelletier — Letter to Cardinal Odescalchi for the Generalat—Dispositions of the Cardinal — His portrait—His reply — Prayers for the Generalat—Generosity of M. de Neuville.

An establishment for poor penitent women, which existed at Grenoble, had, in 1833, fallen into great indigence, and the Bishop, Mgr. de Bruillard, with the view of restoring it, wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, entreating her to send some religious competent to undertake the task of directing it.

As usual, the Mother received the application with delight, but Mgr. Montault refused to sign the obediences for the five sisters she proposed to send, until he was furnished with more precise information. Those details being supplied, the act of foundation was drawn up in similar terms to that of Poitiers, the sisters remaining subject to the authority of the Superioress at Angers.

Mgr. Montault, by his own wish, was present when the sisters left, hoping to be able to soften the pain of separation by words of consolation, for Mans and

Poitiers were near at hand, and Grenoble was the first distant foundation. The daughters of the Good Shepherd, transformed into Apostles, were henceforth to go far to conquer souls. At that time hardly could any one have foreseen how often such scenes of departure and separation would be renewed under Mother Pelletier's government.

The religious reached Grenoble on the 23d December, and went to the Ursuline convent, where they were hospitably entertained, and kept some days to rest after their journey. On December 26th they took up their abode at St. Robert's, as Mgr. Bruillard had arranged.

The foundation began with a series of humiliations, sufferings, and extremes of poverty. There were neither beds, blankets, nor fuel. The Sisters sometimes had to work until eleven o'clock at night, that they might be able to buy themselves bread; they were even once twenty-four hours without food of any kind. This scarcity lasted six months. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was most unhappy about her daughters. She wrote to them on Christmas Day:—

"'Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy . . . for this day is born to you a Saviour.'

"My very dear, my beloved daughters, at last, after nineteen days' absence, and many tears and much anxiety, your dear and much longed for letter has come. But our dear Sister Mary of St. Louis, herself overcharged, says not one word to me about our dear Sister-Assistant and her health. My daughter,

how are you? Soul and body? Ah, you know what I feel, don't you? And how my heart is with you! And you too, my good Mary of St. Louis, are you rested? My poor children, Mary of St. Bernard, and of the Heart of Jesus, and of St. Rose, and of St. Augustine, all of you—how dear to me you are in the bowels of Jesus Christ. My own inmost being is moved with pity for you in all you have endured. Oh, my daughter, it is as you say, a bitter sacrifice. You are our dear Francis Xaviers. Count, too, on the devotedness of our Congregation, for our hearts are with you in the battle. May God give you the victory, my children. From my very heart I bless you at the feet of the Infant Jesus. I went through much last night at the Crib. I did not know of your arrival: I pictured you in the midst of snow and mountains. All our sisters were longing for the letter: they love you much. Our benefactors and benefactresses all pray for you. Courage! Write to us, dear daughters: it will be a pleasure. We shall pray for you and go to Communion for you, my good, my dear Mary of St. Louis. I conjure you lovingly, and out of my own experience, not to set any value on the honour that may seem to be paid to you. Alas! my daughter, all of it is emptiness. Seek after God in your great work, and be free from human respect. Use the excellent judgment God has given you, my daughter, to do things worthy of Him. We rely upon you both, you two dear pillars, both so true. Be prudent with others, be humble, be exact.

You are on the spot, my daughters, and you must do what you think best. I am all yours, but the *all* isn't much. I can do nothing but love you till death. Tell us everything—the smallest details. How much I think of you! Since our painful separation took place, God has been pleased to send us consolation in the marvels He has performed at Poitiers. Oh, my dear daughters! what various blessings He has sent. Our Sister-Assistant there is so admirable, and Monseigneur so kind to them; and they have, moreover, two benefactresses. Our dear sister-*économe* has returned, but it is a great sorrow to her not to have arrived in time to see you all.

"Please give our most humble respects to Monseigneur of Grenoble. How good he is, and how holy. How grateful to him we are. Our worthy Father Teston, too, is one of our founders. Offer him our respectful thanks.

"Now, my dear, my beloved sisters, good-bye. It is hard to leave you, but I am not well. News from you will be my cure.

"At the feet of the Holy Child Jesus, with tender affection, in eternal union, I am your very devoted,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

On the 31st December she wrote again:—

"'My God! Thou hast quickened me according to Thy Word.'

"Oh yes, my daughter, God and Monseigneur de Grenoble, and good M. Teston, have quickened us. Tell his lordship we shall not withdraw from our engagements.

In accordance with our sacred vow and our Constitution, we make the foundation as arranged. Oh, my daughter, do not doubt God's designs. Act in that spirit of union which has hitherto saved our foundations. Be assured, as our dear Sister-Assistant wrote to Mgr., that we shall not forsake you."

M. Pelletier looked upon the foundation at Grenoble as the act by which the Sisters of the Good Shepherd would enter into possession of the south of France. The difficulties which her daughters met with were therefore a great cause of sorrow to her.

She wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers—

"You know what sorrows we have had about the foundation at Grenoble: they have been great as the sea. Every post brought us a journal of misfortunes and sadness. . . . Night and day we knocked at the door of the Heart of Mary, and listened to our sisters' cry; praying unceasingly, and in the distance seeing the offence against God, the work sapped at the foundation. Ah, what a sad spectacle!"

She would have recalled the sisters, had it not been for Mgr. Montault's opposition. "The storm will pass," he said, "and there will come a great calm." All she could do was to continue by ingenious economy to save some little sums of money, which she sent to relieve their distress.

At last it pleased God to hear her prayers and those of the sisters. Prosperous days began for the house at Grenoble. Mgr. Bruillard gave 15,000 francs. The faithful gave abundantly. Mgr. Bruillard and

his Vicars-general took a favourable view of the Generalat, and approved of the steps taken by Mgr. Montault. St. Robert's was out of difficulty and happy, and the Good Shepherd at Angers felt the effect of the change. "We have just had letters from Grenoble. I assure you I never saw anything like it. It is a marvel of love," writes the Mother.

Her letters to her daughters at Grenoble become more frequent and encouraging. We give a few which show with what a mother's love she watched over rising foundations.

"'You have fought a good fight; there is laid up for you a crown of justice.'

"My very dear and beloved daughter, you do faithfully the work intrusted to you by our Lord. You will delight His heart, and He will give you to drink of the torrent of His delights. As for us, my daughter, you are our consolation, and already our hearts crown you. The arrival of your letter on Sunday made it a day of joy to us. Oh, what pleasure it gave us, and what a consolation your affection is! But it pains me to hear that you are so overworked, and that you are without strength or appetite. Ah, yes! it is indeed true that evil-doing recoils on those that do it. May the Lord pardon them. See that your repairs are well done. God will never forsake you. You began with the Cross, and you will receive the Crown. We love your two penitents, poor children, and your little lambs too. I think Grenoble will be our joy, and Poitiers also: the house there is admir-

able; such generous devotedness to God and the Generalat. The house at Metz, conceived in sorrow, is going on better and better. That dear foundation is the triumph of the work. It will soon possess the magnificent building which formerly belonged to the Visitation, with church and choir. How admirable God is in all His works! Beloved daughter, rejoice in Him. You see, He protects what men speak evil of and try to destroy. Oh, confidence and love! Have the 'fifteen Saturdays' made for the Generalat.

"Our beloved Mary St. John of the Cross is, she tells us, enjoying great peace. She wants to go abroad to make God known, and will never give in to our enemies. How much she has had to bear, and how prudent she has been, hiding even her crosses until the great day! Since this fiery trial passed, we have been calm, and had time to breathe. God sheds mercy and grace on His city. The Novitiate goes on well and is increasing. Dear Mme. d'Andigné is having a pretty grotto built for our Blessed Lady at the foot of the new enclosure, which is splendid. Our father, De Neuville, surpasses himself. He spoke with affection of you yesterday. Our sisters, too, love you dearly; when your letters come there is general rejoicing. A thousand affectionate messages to our missionaries of the hot mountains. Dear daughters, how much you all suffer, and how I long to comfort you. Farewell, my beloved daughter, farewell.—Your attached, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia knew that the house at Grenoble was saved, she exhorted her daughters to humble themselves before God, by whom all had been overruled.

On the 1st October 1834, she wrote to the Superioress—

"'How incomprehensible are Thy judgments, O Lord; who can understand them?'

"You are coming, my daughter! You will be welcome. I am with you in spirit day and night. If I could only go to you! But persecution is still too much feared. We long for quiet only for the glory of God, and that His holy work may be done, and we are submissive to His Divine Will in all our crosses. What we wish to be able to do for you, my daughter, is to strengthen your hands by sending you good subjects. I believe that, thanks to the Cross, this house of Grenoble will flourish. But who can understand God's judgments? Those very people who would have liked to crush the good work are themselves crushed. They are excommunicated now by the Bishop who once showered gifts on them. Let Sion utter the voice of mourning, and let us, my daughter, pray and humble ourselves, but not blind our eyes to the truth. The Lord Himself has justified you because you do the work of His love. Poor children! you who have been regretted, you who might have perished, you have been saved by Jesus and Mary. Oh how it has touched me! Now I must go to bless God for His mercies. Yes! we shall pray for you. Do not

be too much afflicted because two penitents have left you. There are always trials of that kind. And your hotel, that you might either take or leave, did you leave it at the foot of the mountain? Oh no! I know your *old ways* too well! You take everything you can get! My daughter, I like your little boarders very much. Mind you tell them that the Novitiate at Angers loves them, and prays that they may come there some day. I am much comforted by what you tell me of Mary of St. Bernard and St. Radegonde — and God bless their labours. Let us pray, my daughter, that the Lord may give us His grace to bring this great work to perfection. You will be its support, its prop. Be virtue and courage itself. How are you? Try and eat a little more, so as to strengthen yourself, for 'thou hast yet a great way to go.' Our dear sisters love you more and more in the love of our Lord. Believe in my prayers for you. I am always your attached,

MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA PELLETIER, *Superioress.*

"My dear daughters, all of you, we exhort you to perseverance and holy virtue. Mary of the Heart of Jesus, are you better? I embrace you and all the other sisters."

When the Foundation at Grenoble was a year old, the sisters had a trial harder than poverty to meet, and the counter-shock of the blow was felt at Angers.

It will be remembered that, at Mgr. Bruillard's request, they had taken up a work already in exist-

ence, but in a state of decay. Certain partisans of the former institution now made an attempt to induce Mgr. Bruillard to change his mind, and the matter went so far that one of his Vicars-general wrote, telling the Mother that her daughters would be sent back to Angers. The letter reached her on Christmas Eve, before Matins, and of course caused her great anxiety. She wrote immediately to Mgr. Bruillard, and during the midnight Mass poured out her trouble to the Infant Jesus, and recommended to Him the foundation so dear to her. She afterwards learnt that the same night Mgr. de Bruillard was secretly inspired that he was not to sign the paper for the sisters' return.

They stayed on at Grenoble, at first in great poverty, but in spite of it took in penitents. The first-fruits of their apostolate was the abjuration of one of these who was a Protestant. The Preservation class was started on the same plan as at Angers, and before long, received many orphans.

Every Good Shepherd colony is anxious to become, as soon as possible, a reproduction in all points of the Angers pattern—to have the same classes, the same exercises, all the arrangements originally made by the Foundress. They are like the Roman legions, who had such devotion to the city of Rome that, in all parts of the world, they tried to make their camps similar to it. The religious of the Good Shepherd think, and rightly, that their Mother foundress's ideal for their holy Institute, with its various groups and organisation, was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that the

graces of their vocation are attached to the organisation laid down by her. They rejoice too, in faithful imitation of the Mother herself, whom they think so admirable. Her example was the attraction to the order in many cases. Saints are given to us, not only to admire, but to imitate. They were filled with the love of God and the love of souls, and in trying to be like them we run no risk.

The Mother foresaw the future in store for the house at Grenoble, when she expended so much ardour upon its foundation and its maintenance. Difficulties had only confirmed her hopes. When the bishop stood by it resolutely, she wrote, "It means the whole of Southern France secured to us."

This foundation developed so rapidly that, in 1836, there was no room at St. Robert's for all the applicants. The Community moved to Seyssinet, but in four years that also was too small, and another house was bought outside Grenoble—its name was the Castle of the Plain. It is delightfully situated, like many convents of this province of pleasant valleys, wild-wooded hills, and beautiful scenery. It is in the Grésivaudan—a valley covered with meadows and cornfields, above which rise vineyards, and is shut in by mountains in the distance. On one of these is the convent of the Carthusians, sheltered in a forest which is the growth of centuries. Other mountains rise up bare and sterile into pointed rocky peaks above ravines, like that of La Salette—La Chartreuse and La Salette, names and neighbourhood both so dear to

religious. In the thirteenth century, St. Bruno established his Order of the Chartreuse here, where it still exists in primitive fervour. In the nineteenth century, La Salette was the place our Blessed Lady chose to appear to two shepherds, and reveal to them the secret of her mercy.

In 1834, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's term of office as Superioress expired, and the religious seized the opportunity of her absence at Poitiers to prepare for the next election. The Foundress was unanimously re-elected to be Superioress of Angers, Le Mans, Grenoble, and Poitiers, for six years, according to the new Constitution. This was a few days before Whitsunday. The joy of the community was expressed by acts of gratitude to God, whilst the Mother herself, with a touching impulse, placed her office and rule in the hands of the Blessed Virgin.

Her re-election acted as a stimulus to her zeal. She looked upon it as a sign that God willed the erection of the Generalat, and the thought of the good likely to result from it to souls never left her. Everything seemed to combine to make her carry out the great plan. The house at Angers, now, thanks to benefactors, large and beautiful, and surrounded by vast gardens, seemed made for a Mother House. One day, when she was in the choir, the idea of the Generalat took such possession of her during the *Magnificat*, that, unable to restrain her emotion, she burst into tears, and hastily left the chapel, begging Sister Mary of St. Chantal of Jesus to preside in her

place. Shutting herself up in a cell, she wrote a letter recounting all she, the Community, and the Superior of the house desired, and sent it to the Cardinal-Vicar, Cardinal Odescalchi, at Rome. The Abbé Jules Morel had told her about him and his functions, an ecclesiastic who was thoroughly acquainted with Roman usages, and the best guide she could have had. He had spent his life in defending Roman doctrines and making them loved, and, on account of his learning and devotion to the Pope, had been made Consulter to the Index.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's letter was very humble. It began with these words:—

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word."

It finished with a profession of submission:—

"I desire nothing but God's greater glory. If the Sovereign Pontiff and your Eminence perceive that there are obstacles to the erection of a Generalat, I humbly submit myself."

In one of the Mother's "Instructions," which took place 23rd January 1858, we are told the following facts about the erection of the Generalat:—

"Some time after I had written to the Cardinal-Vicar, an extraordinary thing happened to me. One night I had just fallen asleep, much more quietly than usual, when it seemed to me I saw a prelate whom I did not know. He was dressed like a cardinal. His countenance was gentle and holy; his whole person inspired respect. He said to me, 'Fear

nothing, my daughter; your work will be approved. God has chosen me to be its Protector.' After these words he disappeared, leaving me full of trust, filled with confidence and consolation. What was not my surprise, a few years later at Rome, to recognise in our venerable Protector, his Eminence Cardinal Odescalchi, the very prelate whom I had seen in the apparition. I told him of my dream quite simply. He seemed to reflect deeply, then said to me, 'There is something extraordinary here. I will tell you now what happened to me with regard to you. For some time I had been anxious to know of an order of women dedicated to the salvation of poor sinful girls. There are several congregations of men devoted to the conversion of sinners, but I knew of none especially for the class I refer to. I constantly asked God to hear my prayer; and one day, when I was celebrating Mass at St. Peter's, I prayed fervently, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, for the grace to find the order I had in my mind. Now that very day your letter reached me.'"

Cardinal Odescalchi was greatly interested in every attempt to further the wellbeing of the people, and he warmly entered into the plans proposed to him. As a simple priest, he had used his powers of mind and government in the service of the Church, and, called to a higher sphere, he signalised his translation to a position of greater authority by obtaining special favours for France. As Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, he presented to Pope

Gregory XVI., and obtained his approbation of, decrees re-establishing the Benedictine and Dominican orders in that country. He had travelled through the Papal States on Apostolic missions, accompanied by the young Abbé Mastaï, afterwards Pius IX., and he had preached retreats in Rome, labours which had made him long for a community similar to that of Mother Pelletier, whose aim and object should be the conversion and sanctification of abandoned sinners.

He afterwards gave up the honours of the purple to enter the Society of Jesus, where he continued his work of preaching to, and evangelisation of, that most neglected portion of Christ's flock, whose rescue is also the work of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and the Good Shepherd.

Two months had passed since the letter went to the Cardinal, when one evening, while the Community were making a procession to the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin for the success of the Generalat, a young professed thought she received an intimation from her that their wishes would be fulfilled, and that, as a pledge of this, the Superioress should hear from Rome next day.

The next day a letter came from Cardinal Odescalchi to the Mother, very encouraging and consoling, and pointing out to her what steps she was to take to ensure success. He promised to help her by presenting her petition to the Congregation and the Pope, as soon as her Bishop, Mgr. Montault, had himself written to the Holy Father. This letter was shown

to Mgr. Montault, who lost no time in drawing up a petition to be laid at the feet of Pope Gregory XVI.

Meantime Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote to Father Vaures, the French penitentiary at St. Peter's, Rome, who had formerly visited the Good Shepherd, and offered his services to the Community. This kind priest constituted himself Postulator of the Generalat, and promised to watch the course of events in order to ensure success.

Whilst Cardinal Odescalchi and Father Vaures were pursuing the cause at Rome, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia ordered at the Good Shepherd at Angers public prayer and pious practices in honour of the Blessed Virgin, for the success of the project. There had lately been a revolutionary crisis at Lyons, during which the sanctuary of Notre Dame de Fourvierè had been threatened with destruction, and consequently Divine Service was suspended. In the spirit of reparation, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia now caused to be erected a chapel and altar to Our Lady of Fourvierè, where the Community, who shared her tender devotion to the Mother of God, went often in procession, singing the *Stabat*. Even in severe winter weather this pious practice was continued, and religious and penitents went barefooted in the snow to the shrine, reciting the seven penitential psalms.

All this time M. de Neuville was doing everything he could for his beloved Institute, to develop and strengthen it. In 1833–34, he had a new building erected. It was two storeys high, and had sixty cells,

and beneath the latter a well-ventilated cloister. He bought a garden for the Magdalens, and paid the pension for several penitents. He was always doing more and more for the different sections of the Community, and always from supernatural motives. It was to the Blessed Virgin, his august Sovereign, that he offered his gifts. He celebrated her seven joys and seven sorrows by offering seven silver hearts for profession. He had so accustomed his soul to see, as the Gospel teaches, heaven beyond earth, Christ in the poor, His Apostles in religious, that to do good was his greatest happiness. To participate in the apostolate of the Good Shepherd was for him sufficient reward.

CHAPTER XI

METZ—TRIALS AND LABOURS OF MOTHER MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA, 1834

Foundation of Metz—Joys of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia—Her letters to Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus of Bedouet—The house of Mans separates itself—The project of the Generalat is favoured at Rome—Religious life in the Good Shepherd—Devotion to St. Philomena.

Whilst at Poitiers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had made the acquaintance of Father Barthès, a fervent religious, capable of understanding her great plans for saving souls, and generous enough gladly to do all he could to further them. He belonged to the Society of Jesus, and was one of those truly apostolic men whose ardent charity is their life. As a young priest in the diocese of Montpellier, he first earned distinction by the wonderful reforms he effected in a neglected almshouse from which religion had been totally banished. He was afterwards chaplain to the general hospital and to the prison; and wherever he went his path was marked with traits of sacerdotal zeal. But all this was merely the prelude to his after-labours in the Society of Jesus. As a missioner, his pathetic eloquence subjugated his hearers. One

Good Friday, when he preached at Blamont College, his youthful audience was so overcome that the preacher had to pause until they recovered their composure. At St. Acheul, Metz, Laval, fruitful results followed his sermons. Almost everywhere his apostolic course was signalised by conversions — sometimes of abandoned sinners, and, in many instances, of apostates who had given up the practice of their religion during the Revolution.

He was also very remarkable for his discernment of vocations, acquired through long habit of prayer, which had given him such Divine familiarity with God that he could distinguish His intentions for those aspiring to the perfect life; and thus he had been led to found the Congregation of Our Lady of Pity at Marseilles.

He thought Mother Mary at St. Euphrasia's work admirable, and not unlike his own ministry as missioner, and forthwith became its zealous protector. He tried to make openings for it in the northern towns of France, where he preached, and kept up a correspondence with the Mother, now sending her a postulant, now a Magdalen, or some poor little sheep who needed the special care of her fold.

Mother Pelletier was always keenly alive to the interests of the rising community, and ever quick to avail herself of kindly feeling towards it, especially in those who had given themselves wholly to God.

When she met Father Barthès, at the convent of the Sacré Cœur at Poitiers, she remarked that this Father

fully entered into her designs, and understood all that the Institute might do for the glory of God. Therefore, on her return to Angers, she wrote to his superior at Laval, and asked and obtained permission that this father might preach a retreat to the community. This visit to the Good Shepherd greatly edified Father Barthès, The work still in course of foundation seemed daily to develop in some new direction, and he foresaw an immense expansion for it. He was, moreover, greatly touched by the holy gaiety with which the Mother bore all trials attending these beginnings.

Being sent to Metz, the Father told the bishop of that diocese, Mgr. Besson, of the work at Angers; and that worthy prelate, full of zeal for souls, seized the idea of an establishment of the Good Shepherd in his episcopal city. As usual, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia agreed, although the number of religious was still so scanty that these frequent demands for foundations were hard to meet. On the Eve of the Assumption, after vespers, the doors of the monastery were, for the third time, opened to send out a colony, a very little one this time—only three religious, Sisters Mary of St. Sophia Lavoye, Superioress; Mary of St. Angela Desvigneaux, Assistant; Mary of St. Martha Martin, lay sister.

The year before, Father Barthès, together with Father Morin, had founded a Jesuit house at Metz, and had told Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia of the generous treatment he had there experienced, and of

the tenacious attachment of the people to their faith, and to everything affecting their honour.

The old town of Metz, hemmed in by the walls and moated fortifications, and close to the undulating banks of the Moselle, was, in those days, still like a mediæval city. The streets were narrow, but they were the scene of busy trade, and high above them rose the beautiful Gothic cathedral, with its perhaps unrivalled grace and delicacy of architecture.

It took Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's daughters four days to reach Metz. On their arrival, they went first to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where they were hospitably received and entertained for a week. Meantime, M. Chalandon, Vicar-general,[1] held an assembly of charitable ladies, whose interest he enlisted for the new foundation. Among them were Mlle. Deshuiles, Mme. de St. Blaise, Mlle. Malherbe, Mme. Désoudin.

A house was hired in the Rue des Récollets, and a room in it converted into a chapel, where every day for the first three or four months Mass was said for the sisters by a priest who was tutor in a gentleman's family. Afterwards the office of chaplain to the community was kindly filled by the Sulpician fathers of the Great Seminary, a congregation still animated by their holy founder M. Olier's zeal for the sanctification of souls.

Some ladies speedily formed the Preservation class.

[1] Abbé Chalandon, afterwards Bishop of Belley, and Archbishop of Aix.

It consisted of fifteen young girls, and was called "St. Anne's work-room."

The Mother's hopes for the house were great. She had been impressed by Father Barthès with the idea that the people of Lorraine might be relied upon; and with the hope that, not only might she look for recruits from among them, but that they should penetrate thence to Germany, where her daughters should also work for souls according to their sublime vocation.

She kept up a most active correspondence with Metz, showing her daughters by wise direction how to win their way and recommend the congregation. These are some of her first letters:—

"The sorrow of your leaving my beloved daughters is followed by the tender joy of receiving news from you. Oh! God be praised. Your dear letters are balm to our souls: our dear sisters could not restrain their tears. You are dearer to us in God, my children, than ever. Our gratitude towards God and Monsigneur de Metz will be eternal. And how shall we make some return to the religious of the Sacred Heart for all their kindness? The Superioress's kind considerate letter, as well as all they have done for us, we can never repay. We will pray for them, for only God can reward them. Offer them our respects, and also to that good lady, the countess, who met you. Our good wishes to everybody! How I do like all the details you tell me in your letters! About allowing the young women under your care to go out. Oh,

I beseech you to beg the gentlemen respectfully not to permit anything of the kind. Let us be faithful to our holy rules. If they want to separate the classes, well, we will help you by-and-by. Could we possibly leave you to yourselves in your works? No, indeed! never! Our good (Sister Mary of) St. Martha will be a help to you. I constantly think of it. Be very good, my dear daughters: you need so much grace for your great and holy vocation. If you have recourse always to Jesus and Mary, they will be your help in everything.

"The prayers and communions of your Mother House will be with you. Be sure we do pray for you. Don't let anything discourage you. See God in all things; edify your neighbour; educate souls; show yourselves humble and gentle, but dignified, prudent—wise also. Do all you can to console your worthy superiors. You, I think, will dry our tears, and bring to pass the triumph of the Generalat. I feel very peaceful, very hopeful, about the foundation at Metz.

"My dear (Sister) Mary of St. Sophia, we have written both to you and to your mamma. And you, my (Sister Mary of St.) Angela, your sister came here. Send us in exchange (for this) long letters like to-day's: you did us so much good! Our sisters cherish you and keep you in their very hearts. Our classes send their respects. Our worthy founder still feels your departure; but he is so holy: you know him. Mme. d'Andigné has come at last to our great

joy. She is a tender mother to us and to you. She longs for news of you.

"Adieu. I am with you in spirit. In union with the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I am your mother who loves you more than she does herself, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

A few days later she wrote to Metz again—

"*September 8th*, 1834.

"O God, come to my assistance. I have received your letter, my beloved daughter. We are all agreed that you continue to show much prudence and delicacy in your dealings with M. Chalandon and the ladies of the Council. Tell them what our usages are very gently, my daughter. As to gifts, leave all that to good M. Chalandon to arrange. You will see, my daughter, that God will bless your trust in Him, and will not leave you destitute. The good Superioress at Poitiers acted in this way. Be very wise, very ready to conciliate. Oh, try, together with our beloved Sister Mary of St. Angela, to cultivate carefully the field intrusted to you by the Lord. Make this foundation succeed, my dear daughters, at no matter what cost. Very well, if the ladies so desire, do begin with those dear orphans; but don't leave off speaking about penitents, and they will be sure to come. Be of good courage!

"We will always pray for you, my three dear good daughters. Our sisters think constantly of you. Perhaps you have crosses already, but don't be sad.

God is with you! We have just had a clothing of six postulants. I write in haste and embrace you from my very heart. Send us some postulants. Your attached, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Four days later another letter left Angers, as if the Mother desired to show her daughters that there was but one community in different houses, but one Superioress, one Mother for the several foundations."

"FROM OUR MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
September 12th, 1834.

"'Bless the Lord, oh you that dwell in His house.'

"Truly, my dear daughters, you dwell at the door of the tabernacle, and a flood of grace pours upon you. You, my good dear Sister Mary of St. Sophia, you run after postulants: I see this in your dear letter and in that of our dear (Sister) Mary of St. Angela's. She is full of having a great flock of penitents. My dear daughters, I cannot express to you how we praise God for the work at Metz. Your news enlarges our hearts, and you are dearer and dearer to us. This is what we think about the penitents. You must wait until you move to another house, and be, meantime, very calm and moderate, and show great deference and delicacy towards the ladies of the Council, but don't compromise yourselves with them. Preserve our holy work of the Generalat, but don't be worried if the ladies are inclined to be authoritative: it will only last temporarily. Once you are

within your holy enclosure you will be free. Don't be down-hearted. I have confidence in you. You may, I am sure, take the old Visitation house. Oh, wait and suffer rather than lose it. The church and choir are immense advantages.

"Be as respectful and loving to the nuns of the Sacred Heart as children to their mothers. I cannot tell you the veneration we feel for them. When you have moved from your present quarters you may ask Monseigneur and M. Chalandon to allow you to have two more subjects to begin the work for penitents, and you may say you will apply to your Mother House for more sisters. Try always to show attachment and dependence, and all will go well, and you will continue to give edification, as you have done hitherto. You speak to me of two postulants, my good Mary of St. Sophia, both from the Sacred Heart. Oh, how we long to have them, if it be God's will. To-morrow we are going to communion for your mission. I assure you, it is the loveliest blossom in our crown. Send plenty of subjects to the Mother House: that will be one way of supporting and extending the Generalat. God will bless you for it. Can you arrange about the postulant from Luxembourg? We should like to have plenty of them from those northern parts. Father Barthès told me there were a large number there, and that if our holy vocation were known in Metz and on the German frontier, the Novitiate at Angers might be filled.

My dear daughters, follow our holy work. It lies

in your hands. You know we do not hold to things of earth: make, therefore, your own conditions; do what seems best, and leave the rest. M. de Neuville and Mme. d'Andigné send you many polite and affectionate messages, and so does our chaplain. Our professed sisters and the novices, those of the *faithful* foundations, pray for you unceasingly. We all cherish you in the love of Jesus Christ, in which I am, my dear daughters, tenderly yours,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA.

"My dear daughters, how I bless God, and what consolation you have given me by telling me you are keeping the rule! Oh, continue to do so."

Mother Pelletier rejoiced in the success of the foundations—rejoiced, too, that they awakened vocations. Zeal, like light, communicates itself to all who approach it. Young, generous-hearted souls, who loved God, and were beloved by Him with a special love, longed to cast in their lot with the religious whom they saw devoting such admirable virtues to that sublime service, the conversion of sinners. These vocations, which resulted from the foundations, were always handed on to the Mother House, and the success of the foundations, when communicated to the novices at Angers, stimulated their zeal. This union, in common sentiments of all hearts, produced a mutual influence for good which reacted on the whole community.

"19*th September* 1834.

"To my dear daughters of Metz,—Grace and benediction in Jesus Christ our Lord. You will not doubt, my dear, my beloved sisters, that both your letters received yesterday filled our souls with consolation. To God and Mary be the honour and glory; to your superiors and benefactresses our gratitude; to you, as beloved little ones, the tender affection of our hearts. We are giving you several of our communions, and we pray God to complete His work for His own glory and for the holy work depending on you. You really cannot imagine, my dear daughters, what our sisters' zeal is for Metz; when your letters come, they flock to hear them. The last I read while I was giving the Novitiate, and there were tears shed, but only for the love of God. Ah! my dear children, go on being the consolation of our large family: you know what we have suffered, for I may say you were born in tears. But the Cross strengthened you, and you were blessed in it. You will have more crosses, more troubles; but the more you suffer the more beautiful will be the work, the more souls you will save. Oh yes! our three dear sisters, we do indeed bless you and your little lambs. Send us news often of your dear selves. But, my good Sister Mary of St. Sophia, we hear nothing from you of your two Sacred Heart postulants: did the affair come to nothing? *Fiat.* The Lord tries us in our subjects, and we adore His designs. We want twenty-four good subjects, for we know

another foundation will be asked for in a few months. Tell us something about those two young ladies.

"Good-bye, my dear daughters. Your house at Angers is overwhelmed with graces, but the Cross is there too. The sisters and we ourselves embrace you."

The religious at Metz, otherwise most favourably received, regretted that orphans, rather than penitents, were sent to their care. This was a source of grief to them. The Institute had one chief aim; and while the sheep of their predilection were absent, that aim was unattained, and the religious unsatisfied. Mother Pelletier shared their sorrow; it was her desire that the work at Metz should have the fulness of its beauty, as at Angers. She therefore wrote often to the benefactors of the house, asking them to provide the religious with the necessary means of fulfilling their holy vocation. She wrote to her daughters the following letter:—

"Monastery of Angers,
October 17th, 1834.

"My soul glorifies the Lord with yours for the good He has done us.

"Your letter, which came yesterday, rejoiced us: you have explained yourself so clearly, my daughter, that I am satisfied. Write always in the same way. How good the Jesuit fathers are! they, too, are the children of the Cross and persecution, and they are always our deliverers. Whilst one father was rescuing

us at Metz, another was giving us light and consolation at Angers, for we have had many crosses with regard to that holy work at Metz. But at last, my daughters, you are safe, and we may breathe. You are to have penitents. You are supporting the Generalat. O God! how many graces! Yes, we will stand by you. It was our good assistant's letter that gained the victory! God be praised! How glad I am that God is making use of that dear foundress. Ah, my dear daughter, if I had sought my own elevation in the holy cause of the Generalat, I should have been disappointed; but, thanks be to God, my soul is in peace. The glory of God, the salvation of souls—these are my life and only work. Let men judge me as they please; but as for you, be always our comfort and consolation, and never cease asking God for the graces you require. Live together always in the most perfect union. It delights me that you are always helping one another.

Nothing arrests the progress of our holy work. You know what our *father*, De Neuville, is. He heaps favours on us, and so does our kind *mother*, D'Andigné. Both of them, and all the community, send you a thousand affectionate messages. We wish you all kinds of graces. How useful it is, my daughter, to understand that crosses are inseparable from a work like the Generalat, which is to be the instrument of salvation to many souls. How many enemies we have! You know what our troubles are, my dear (Sister) Mary of St. Sophia; but there are those who do not understand them, and might cause us to fall

into the snares spread to catch us. Always tell us everything. Let us keep closely united, and help one another. Pray, my daughter, that plenty of subjects, and good ones, may come, for the harvest is great. Let us by the most generous courage rise above persecutions. Finally, let us strive to keep our foundations intact."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent more religious from Angers to Metz, and in 1835 the little community moved to the Rue du Paradis, where there was room for the construction of a penitents' class, a school, and the foundation of a promising house.

The wonderful work of charity carried on by her daughters, whom she had throughout so zealously supported, delighted the Mother, and her letters express the joy she could not contain.

The following is to the Superioress at Poitiers, and is dated 7th September 1834:—

"The all-merciful God sometimes leads us out to Thabor. Oh yes, my dear daughters; and how our hearts have overflowed with joy, these last few days, at the sight of the marvels at Metz! Our sisters have been received like angels from heaven. Monseigneur showered benefits on them, and readily promised his aid at Rome. The Council of Noble Ladies at Metz is admirable. The town has great resources. The house our sisters have is inconvenient; but patience. There is already talk of buying the old Visitation convent for them. A conventual building and a magnificent

church and choir. Oh, my God, I cannot utter all the love and gratitude I feel. The small house they are in now is all in order, the girls well behaved, the furniture tidy. They have a pretty chapel, and have received some precious donations. Are not all these things, my dear sisters, great graces, and do not we owe much to the Lord? Oh, help us to thank Him."

All through the year 1834, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's letters to the Superioress at Poitiers are like a mirror, reflecting the alternations of her feelings, her joys, sorrows, gratitude, and fears. She rejoices in Mgr. Bouillé's kindness; she loves to speak of the wonderful charity of M. de Neuville and Mme. D'Andigné; she describes the building, rising as if by magic, for the flock and its mistresses.

"Our founder is always the same, and always incomparable; he showers kindness on us. You know what our dear Mother d'Andigné has just been doing—she is always giving, and watches over everything. What a beautiful monastery is being founded by these two together. Statues, good books, and everything is being provided; it is the temple of the Lord, and the place where His glory dwelleth. The offices are perfect, and order everywhere. It is all yours and God's, my beloved daughters. It will rejoice us to share it with you."

She speaks of the difficulties at Grenoble, and the pain caused her by what is taking place thus. She longs that every one of her daughters should be happy —the sorrows of each are made her own. Her mind

is constantly filled with the Generalat. She asks God for it, and rejoices to see M. Perché and M. Mainguy interested in it. Then consolations come from the Magdalens; their piety makes her hopeful for the future of the Institute. She also takes pleasure in the union that exists between Angers and Poitiers —the letters and little gifts exchanged between the two monasteries; the good wishes for the sisters' feast days. Their union is a source of edification. All are united in prayer for the success of the four houses —Angers, Poitiers, Le Mans, Grenoble—and, when difficulties are smoothed away at Grenoble, all hearts are comforted. She is fortified by her Bishop's encouragement; and, when he visits the Good Shepherd, she writes to tell Sister Mary of St. Stanislaus Bedouet of the kind way in which he talked of the Generalat.

Her former confessor, M. Alleron, who kept up relations with her all his life, wrote to her from Tours that his interest in the Generalat was misinterpreted there. But, while sure of the approval of her superiors, no contradictions daunted Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia; her soul was of another mould. Suffering was changed into merit, and gave her fresh motives for courage and perseverance.

One of her daughters, (Sister) Mary of St. Chantal Moreau, desired to go back to Tours to end her days, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia facilitated her doing so in every way, obtaining the necessary permission from Mgr. Montault at Angers, and from the Refuge at Tours, and providing a suitable escort for the journey.

The sister died shortly afterwards at Tours, a great grief to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who had always loved her as one of her own children.

Almost at the same time she heard of the death of M. Fustier, who had been her staunch defender and protector at Tours. "Ah! how much I feel his death," she wrote; "but he is a saint and with God. That is my comfort. My tears were not dry before news of fresh trouble came from Le Mans."

M. Moreau, director of the great seminary at Le Mans, who had desired to have the Good Shepherd founded there, and had received the religious very cordially upon their arrival, had now seized the idea of the Generalat, and was determined to establish it at Le Mans. This the sisters steadily resisted, as contrary to the vows of their profession, and M. Perché, with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, supported them.

Meanwhile all at Angers laboured to obtain the Generalat. "Abbé Morel continues to render us the greatest services," she wrote. He was giving the novices lessons.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was discreet and prudent about the admission of postulants, and had also refused a religious from the Refuge at Caen who wanted to come to Angers. She did not wish for extension at the expense of other houses. But recruits that came from the world were a great joy to her. In one of her letters, she speaks thankfully of three choir postulants from La Vendée—humble, virtuous, young girls—"They are our treasures." To the Good Shep-

herd, as to many other communities, La Vendée was the nursery of sound vocations.

There was peace at Angers; both Magdalens and Penitents were giving their Superiors consolations they had hardly anticipated. At Poitiers the atmosphere was unclouded, and the house growing and prospering. At Grenoble the difficulties of the foundation were past, and the Bishop, his clergy, the nobility, the townsfolk, every one helping on the Good Shepherd, and bringing offerings, sacred vessels, money, linen, food, favours, for which the religious blessed God.

But a storm was gathering at Le Mans. M. Moreau persisted in his plans, although none of the other houses of the Good Shepherd would accept them.

Help came, however, from an unexpected quarter to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. Attempts had been made to prejudice M. Regnier against her plans; but, having studied them personally with that rare good sense which in him rose almost to the height of genius, he became a partisan of the Generalat. He was grieved at M. Moreau's mode of action, and assured Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia that, in his opinion, these contradictions were only so many pledges of success sent by God. No opinion could have given her more confidence. "M. Moreau wrote against me to M. Regnier, but the latter came and talked to me himself. Our conversation lasted an hour and a half, and he said nothing indeed to wound me; rather, he enlightened and encouraged me by his excellent advice with regard

to the Generalat, and he promised all the help he could give."

The Bishop of Le Mans, Mgr. Bouvier, came himself to visit the Good Shepherd at Angers, and proposed to the ten novices from his diocese to return with him; but all, without exception, refused. His lordship, however, still declared his determination to separate the house at Le Mans from that of Angers. "My lord, we shall not cease on that account to bless you," was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's only reply to him. From that moment the house at Le Mans ceased to have any relations with Angers—a heart-breaking sorrow to the servant of God, whose daughters were dearer to her than life.

M. Perché tried to comfort her. "There was never any one like him," she wrote to the Mother Bedouet: "he is so learned, so enlightened. It is a consolation to feel oneself guided by him. Ah! how much I like him! He has more graces for the work in him than ten others! He has done us the greatest good—he is the pillar of the Generalat. He talked to all our Superiors, and won them over to it; he strengthened our souls, made our crosses easier to bear, and threw light on the dark places in the future. This is the work he did in God and through God."

Everything that took place around her seemed to fortify the Superioress in her convictions. Not only did Metz, Grenoble, and Poitiers, blessed by God and man, develop under the protection of bishops and

clergy, but the Jesuit fathers expressed their astonishment and edification at the graces they found in the community. During a retreat they gave in July 1834, they spoke specially of the supernatural life manifested. They used to recommend the work in their missions, and were even commissioned to obtain a foundation for a certain town in Germany.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia now began to hear those names of foreign towns which would resound so often in her ears, when not only Germany, but the whole world, should be conquered by her children, and her heart was filled with hope. She had written to Rome to explain all she had done about the Generalat, and the object she had in view; and, on the 3rd August 1834, she received a letter from Cardinal Gregorio. He exhorted her to continue the work of the Generalat, which would, he said, rejoice the paternal heart of the Holy Father, who, later on, at the request of the bishops, would approve it. But henceforward she was, said the Cardinal, to make her foundations in the spirit of dependence on the Mother House.

Her joy was unbounded. The object for which so many prayers had been offered, the cause fraught with so much good, the Generalat was favourably received at Rome by the Congregations and Cardinals.

This great joy consoled her for the anxieties and annoyances that soon followed. Metz, like Grenoble, had now to pass through the stage of trial which almost always follows upon the first enthusiasm of foundation. Some of the lady benefactresses became

exacting; but the bishop entered into direct correspondence with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and their difficulties were eventually smoothed over.

Le Mans had now become a centre of opposition. A letter emanating from there had been addressed to the Bishop of Grenoble, inviting him to take the same side, but he refused, and suggested recourse to the Pope and the shelter of his authority.

But amid all these exterior distractions, the religious life still flourished in the house at Angers. The professed sisters vied with one another in zeal for the conversion of sinners, and their own sanctification. The Magdalens' enclosure was being enlarged, and their chapel built, and they themselves edified the community by their recollection and spirit of penance. The Penitents were now reckoned by hundreds, and some had come from long distances to seek the asylum Mother Pelletier had provided.

Mme. d'Andigné spent herself for the beloved Community, adorning cloisters and chapels with pictures, travelling to and from Paris and Poitiers for its interests, writing to her friends, and especially Mme. de Lignac, to acquaint them with the grandeur and beauty of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's work, who all the time was prudently but enthusiastically continuing it, and corresponding on the subject with bishops, her own religious and charitable persons outside the cloister. One day she writes of herself as corresponding with officers who have recommended certain penitents to her, and with whom she for some

time had relations. "There are days when I am altogether in correspondence with different regiments, but all for God, my daughter: is it not so?" These last words invariably express the inmost cry of her heart. At that period she carried on personally all her own correspondence, which was very extensive; she also herself went into every case brought to her, and discussed each with her own remarkable wisdom. She now had breviaries printed for her religious, and organised processions and novenas for the success of her works. When she heard of the desecration of the church at Fourvière, she begged the sisters at Poitiers to raise an altar of expiation to the Blessed Virgin. She received all penitents herself, and watched over every detail of the convent. In October 1834, a penitent came who had never been baptized, and the Mother felt the greatest consolation in bringing her into the Church and giving her to our Divine Lord.

Mother Mary St. Chantal of Jesus, her assistant, ably seconded her in everything with experienced zeal. "After most terrible storms, all is now peace at the Good Shepherd," she wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers. "We are enjoying a most profound calm. Those who attempted our destruction only made our foundation firm; crosses made us invincible. Truly God's blessings are poured in torrents over us. Subjects, houses, fresh benefits, gifts of every description, admirable regularity, interior joy, silence, peace! Ah! my dear daughters, how great are God's designs!

This morning we were eighty wearing the religious habit. Some shed tears. I was touched too. We have given the habit to ten postulants. The union, the religious silence which prevail are what I admire. Oh, my dear daughters, let us persevere in this spirit."

This letter gives a picture of the supernatural life which reigned at Angers at the close of 1834, when the labours of the first establishment there, and the struggles and cares of the foundation at Poitiers, Le Mans, Grenoble, and Metz were over.

M. de Neuville rejoiced in Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's joy, and hardly knew how to express his gratitude to God for having granted him the privilege of being associated in a work of such fair promise.

"What a marvellous year this has been for your Institute," he wrote to the Superioress of the house at Poitiers. "My heart is really grateful and deeply touched by the magnificence of God's grace to me in permitting me to co-operate in your holy works. It humbles me, for I am not worthy of it; but Our Lady has prayed to the Good Shepherd for me; and for this I thank you humbly, for to your ardent love for the Mother of Mercy do I owe this precious grace, which will perhaps be the cause of my salvation. Be so kind as to thank the Blessed Virgin for me.

"I strongly advise you to establish the devotion to St. Philomena among you. If you cannot get her life or pictures of her, I will send them. I have already ordered a statue of her to be placed in the

choir of the Church of the Good Shepherd, which the religious are to receive processionally."

Whilst the Good Shepherd was imploring the Holy Father at Rome to approve the Generalat, Rome was being petitioned for the body of St. Philomena. To this saint therefore Mother Pelletier recommended her cause, and in order to pay her special honour, she had her statue erected in the convent, and took steps to propagate the devotion in the other houses of the order. When the Generalat was finally constituted, she and the whole community promised special devotion to the saint as their protectress, a devotion still very active in the Institute.

St. Philomena, by many tokens, has shown her special protection of the order which was first to choose her for protectress, and one of the first to raise altars in her honour.

The cultus of this saint has become dear to the servants of God in the nineteenth century. The Curé d'Ars was her devoted client. Nothing is, however, known of her life beyond the fact of her martyrdom. Her relics were brought to the diocese of Nole, and were there held in great veneration, and were the cause of many miracles. Her body had been originally interred in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, the vial of blood and the usual insignia of martyrdom showing that she died for the faith. Her tomb was discovered in 1802, and Gregory XVI. authorised her feast in the Church, in consequence of the many miracles obtained through her intercession.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia greatly contributed to propagate the devotion to St. Philomena throughout the world by the foundation of convents of the Good Shepherd, for each house has confided the patronage of one of their classes to the youthful martyr, who has rewarded this devotion by many favours.

CHAPTER XII

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GENERALAT, 1834–1835

More opposition to the Generalat—Mgr. Montault defends it at Angers and Father Kohlmann at Rome—It is approved by the Cardinals—Mother Pelletier's joys and troubles—The decree for the Generalat announced at Angers—M. Regnier—Letters from Cardinals d'Isla and Gregorio—Fresh attacks, and Gregory XVI.'s answer—Cardinal Odescalchi appointed Protector.

WHILST the Generalat was under consideration in the court of Rome, a fresh storm, far more terrible than the earlier one, was raised against the Good Shepherd. M. Moreau of Le Mans and M. Dufêtre of Tours had enlisted in the campaign against the house at Angers thirteen bishops, who believed, that in writing to Rome to prevent the erection of the Generalat, they were simply acting on the defensive, and protecting the Houses of Refuge in their respective dioceses. Among them, the Archbishop of Tours was most ardent. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was described as ambitious and seeking human glory, and her religious were treated as schismatics.

On the other hand, the Bishops of Grenoble and Poitiers wrote to oppose this formidable league. The Bishop of Grenoble, Mgr. Bruillard, to whom had been sent a memorial of the various accusations

brought against the Good Shepherd, returned this answer, "I have accepted the Generalat and all its conditions."

The Bishop of Metz appeared to be shaken at first, and was, for a short time, inclined to declare the independence of the house at Metz; but, yielding ultimately to the entreaties of the religious, he gave his adhesion to the Generalat, and wrote to Rome in that sense.

For several months, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was in suspense as to the issues of the campaign. If the proceedings of her adversaries were alarming, on the other hand she had great confidence in the goodness of her cause and in God's protection, which hitherto had visibly ordered all things.

This spirit of absolute confidence in God, mingled with maternal charity, is breathed forth in her letters to her daughters at Metz.

"MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
October 23rd, 1834.

"God is my witness how tenderly I love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

"I could not read your letter of October 19th, my very dear daughter, without the tears coming into my eyes. Oh, what graces God gives you! I can see it in your little letter: I know you will steadfastly support the work; and this is precious to us. At Grenoble and Poitiers, also, our sisters are admirable. We can see God's blessing descending on these

three works. My dear daughter, thank you for all the details you give about Monseigneur de Metz: they please us very much. He really seems very devoted to the Generalat, which is so beset by enemies. Ah! if God did not support it, surely we must long ago have given in. I have great confidence in you! Oh, my daughter! if our Holy Father, the Pope, condemned it, of course I should instantly yield. I love our Mother, the Holy Church, far too much to have the slightest idea opposed to it. The very thought of such sentiments is horrible to me; but if, in spite of the calumniating memorials invented and sent to Rome, if, I say, our Holy Father permits the continuation of this great work, as it was described to him, fourteen months since, by our venerable prelate ah! then, my daughter, the time will have come for us to rise above all contradictions. Men of great enlightenment are full of hope and work for us; they pray unceasingly and without wavering for a moment. Monseigneur de Metz's letter to Sister-Assistant is a model of wisdom and moderation: he is a holy man, and truly filled with the Spirit of God."

"I embrace Sister St. Angela; her dispositions console me greatly. But your little note, my dear daughter, made me praise God and shed tears. In your zeal for the Generalat I see the work of God's grace. May God support you. I write to you in the early morning light. I have never had so much to do.

"The prefect of this town has proposed to us a most praiseworthy scheme: he wants us to have an

establishment for young girls who have had the misfortune to commit some offence, but whom it is desired to spare the horror and corruption of prison life. It is for souls, my dear daughters, and you know our sisters. This new mission is the height of their desires. Each one is ready to volunteer for work in this yet uncultivated field. You see God spoils me by giving me such daughters. Surely our delights are in our union and peace. The prefect is to come again in a few days to arrange everything. He seemed to be extremely pleased with the good work done here, and wrote at once to the Ministry in our favour. In short, there is nothing God does not make use of. I have had a charming letter from your dear mamma. I think a postulant is coming from Roanne. But where are yours, my daughter? (Mary of) St. Angela told me you were corresponding with a good curé. We expect one of your letters by the next post. Our sisters send you their love, and they all pray for you. Good-bye again, beloved daughters. Believe in my sincere attachment in the sacred love of the Divine hearts of Jesus and Mary. Your very devoted,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Every effort was made by the adversaries of the Good Shepherd to detach the foundations at Poitiers, Metz, and Grenoble, and one of these opponents, no doubt to discourage the Superioress, boasted he could easily effect the separation. He miscalculated his own strength, however, and knew nothing of the affection

her daughters felt for her. While all this trouble was going on, the convent at Metz sent five postulants to Angers as a token of complete dependence. Mother Pelletier wrote the following on this occasion :—

"MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
November 9th, 1834.

"'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'

"Very dear and beloved sisters, yesterday, 8th November, at eleven in the evening, with joy and tenderness we received your dear doves. They are a victory, my very dear daughters, which we owe to your prayers, your zeal, your devotion to God's work. What shall I say to you of our feelings towards your charities? 'Ah,' our sisters say, their eyes filled with tears, 'ah,' Mary of St. Sophia is indeed faithful; and Mary of St. Angela—God, my dear daughters, will bless you. I must just mention, *by the way*, that the Generalat is going on well, and so is everything here. Oh, what graces! we are inundated with them. Oh, my dear daughters, let crosses which have brought us so much good be dear to us. But to return to our doves. At mid-day, a very kindly expressed letter from the convent of the Sacred Heart informed us of their having left Metz; we are now answering it. Please send on the letter at once, my dear daughters. Two of our *tourière* sisters waited at the diligence office for the postulants, and here we welcomed them very tenderly. They seemed delighted. Thank you very much for all your information. I will answer your

dear letter another time, as I am in a great hurry now."

Hardly was her pen laid down after writing this letter, which wound up with some very minute and practical advice, than she received news from Rome that the action she had taken with regard to the Generalat was viewed with favour, and that the Cardinals, like herself, were considering it with a view to the greater glory of God. This good news, she thinks, she may at once give her daughters at Metz.

"HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD,
November 10th, 1834.

"Very dear and beloved sisters in our Lord, let us render thanks to God for all His benefits. I am obliged to employ our secretary to write immediately to you. I am very busy about matters that I can no longer keep from you—you especially, beloved sisters, who have shared so bravely all our crosses and persecutions. Ah! be of good courage, I conjure you; let us continue to fight for the glory of God and His holy Mother, our powerful Protectress. You remember, no doubt, the letter I wrote myself to Rome about our crosses and persecutions. I waited for the answer in the deepest peace, casting myself utterly into the arms of Divine Providence. To-day, the 10th instant, the answer has come, bringing precious news. Our hearts are overflowing with joy and thankfulness: it is so very favourable. One of our sisters who is in retreat foresaw it. Oh, how good God is to us! Ah! let us

humble ourselves in His holy presence, and redouble our zeal and fervour in supporting the work of the Generalat so well begun. You have done your part, beloved sisters, in sending us postulants. They will help us to uphold it. Everything in this house of Angers is going on perfectly well, and yours, too, goes on well. Let us thank the Lord for all His mercies."

The firmest supporter of the Good Shepherd and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was the Bishop, Mgr. Montault. In spite of his eighty-four years, the unjust and violent attacks made upon the Good Shepherd awoke in him a generous ardour, and he applied himself to the task of enlightening the Roman Congregations, by plainly exposing all the advantages of the Generalat, and the single-mindedness of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. At the close of a life devoted to God's service, he preserved his enthusiasm for good, and a faculty, sharpened by experience, for disentangling supernatural projects from the stifling meshes of intrigue.

In the "Life of Mgr. Montault," by M. Dumont, we read, page 231—

"Mgr. Montault, who knew union to be strength, supported the creation of the Generalat with the zeal and fervour requisite for success in such a matter. We need not here recall all the obstacles fabricated to hinder the erection of the Generalat, nor the ceaseless struggles of the noble old Bishop with opposition, so much the more serious as proceeding from an elevated source in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; let us

merely remark that, strong in the goodness of his cause, he composed and sent to the Sovereign Pontiff a memorial in which, summoning to the task all his old logical vigour, he displayed marvellous perspicuity, precision, and order. It was this work, in which there was not a word betraying the slightest sign of weakened faculties, that caused all obstacles from Rome to be removed. The Pope's brief was the consequence of it, and we know, upon good authority, that Gregory XVI. expressed his astonishment that a document, drawn up with such force of reason and deduction, such sequence of ideas, qualities generally found only in men in the prime of life with well-organised brains, should be the work of a veteran who had nearly completed his eighty-fifth year.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's wish at first had been only to keep silent, and abandon her cause to the protection of the Blessed Virgin; but at last, by the advice of the friends of the Good Shepherd, she consented to write to Rome herself, to explain her intentions and their aims and advantages. She did not allude to her opponents. When consulters assembled for their last sitting, the Rev. Father Kohlmann, adviser to the Congregation, after having made himself acquainted with the contents of her letter, replaced it on the table; then reflecting for a few moments, he laid his hand on it and said, "The truth is here." This opinion was unanimously adopted when the affair was laid before the Assembly of Cardinals, and on the 8th January 1835, the articles

of the decree for the Generalat were finally fixed, and on the 16th of the same month approved by Gregory XVI. But the decree was not immediately despatched.

Father Kohlmann wrote to Mgr. Montault that the Sisters of the Good Shepherd would not only have their decree, but would, in all probability, be summoned to Rome to take the direction of a house of charity, in such esteem were they with the Cardinal-Vicar and the Holy Father himself. Father Kohlmann, who had succeeded in communicating his own views to the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, wrote to the Mother-Assistant at the Good Shepherd—"I cannot tell you how this great idea, which the all-good God has put into your beautiful soul, of extending, so far as it may depend on you, this great work to all parts of the world, has laid hold of me. I cannot sufficiently admire and bless Divine Providence in the choice of the great souls called to carry out this holy work, your holy and generous foundress, and M. de la Potherie de Neuville. Oh, what beautiful crowns God has prepared for you and them. Rejoice in the Lord, and consider the approval as a certainty. Meantime, recommend everything to our Good Shepherd and His most holy Mother, that the blessing of both Son and Mother may descend upon this beautiful work, which is destined, it seems to me, to give God so great glory, and to snatch from hell so many souls."

In this same letter, Father Kohlmann remarks that

it would be well to add *Angers* to the official title of the Good Shepherd, that all the foundations might thus have an unmistakable indication of their origin and Mother House, and of the submission and dependence due to the latter. The title was, therefore, to be, "*The daughters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd of Angers.*" "In the second place," writes the Father, "you wish to have the Bishop of Angers as Superior-General. (1) It is impossible to over-estimate the inconvenience of having two generals of equal or unequal authority in a religious order. (2) Your actual Bishop is in perfect harmony with you, but will it be the same with all his successors? and, if not, imagine the distress of a Superioress-general in litigation with a Superior-general who was her Bishop! The Superioress-general, assisted by her counsellors, should have perfect liberty in the government of the order and the distribution of subjects. Believe me that, by such an arrangement, you will make a rod for your own back, and that, for religious orders who aim at extension, there is no better Superior-general than the Sovereign Pontiff, and that they prosper best under the immediate jurisdiction and protection of the Holy See. The religious of the Sacred Heart put themselves under this immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See, and they have good reason to congratulate themselves upon it."

These wise counsels were confirmed by future events, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had cause often to congratulate herself on having listened to

them. It seems as if Divine Providence, having in view the almost miraculous extension of the Order, had carefully watched over it at the beginning to secure the removal of all hindrances which might have impeded its future progress.

Father Kohlmann, in his long career as a Jesuit missionary in Germany, Italy, and America, had experienced the advantages of belonging to a society under the direct authority of the Holy See.

In spite of opposition from French sources, the beauty of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's plan at last won over all the cardinals, prelates, and religious at Rome who were concerned in it. Father Vaures displayed such activity about it that in a single day he went from the Vatican to the Quirinal six times. Father Kohlmann wrote letter after letter, to point out every detail of procedure. Cardinal Gregorio, who had been at first somewhat cool, owing to the letter received from the Archbishop of Tours, became one of the ardent adherents of the cause. He went to the decisive sitting of the Sacred Congregation in fear and trembling, and found all the Cardinals, without exception, assembled —an unusual occurrence. All were unanimous in approving the Generalat. When the decree was read to the Holy Father, and the passage reached where it is said that the Superioress of Angers may found houses, Father Kohlmann rose and asked leave to speak. "This phrase," he said, "appears to me incomplete: *found throughout the whole universe* should be added." Cardinal Odescalchi turned to him with a smile and

said, "Father Kohlmann, do you want to make this Congregation into a second edition of the Society of Jesus?" "You have expressed my meaning," replied the Father, and then sat down.

Even Cardinal Gregorio's very servant was interested in it. She had heard of the beautiful work of the Good Shepherd at Angers, and she shared her master's touching anxiety as to the issue. She conceived such an affection for the religious and for the plan proposed by their Mother, that she gave all her prayers for their intention. The day the last sitting of the Sacred Congregation took place, she stayed until seven in the evening, in the antechambers at the Vatican, to be first to know if the Generalat was approved. A daughter of the people herself, she seemed to possess an intuitive perception of the great good the work would do for poor unfortunate women. Simple hearts that are given to God, and free from self-interest and vanity, have great insight, and discern that which is good and desirable in the works the saints undertake.

All this time at Angers the religious, informed by Fathers Kohlmann and Vaures of all the circumstances attending the course of the affair, redoubled their prayers and private devotions, and especially they prayed to their new patroness, St. Philomena. From this period Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia always wore, in the silver heart prescribed by the Rule, a relic of the saint, and began the practice she never afterwards discontinued, of saying a prayer to her

every night before going to bed. Dwelling habitually in the sense of communion with the saints, and in practical belief in the efficacy of their assistance in her apostolate, she was fond of asking some particular saint for some particular favour; and when it was obtained, she kept a special devotion to the saint, who became the patron of the grace obtained. While Rome was legislating for the all-important spiritual interests of the Good Shepherd, the correspondence between the Mother House and the foundations was more than ever active.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers—

"The same day came a fourth letter from Rome, the best of all that have come. It is a miracle of Our Blessed Lady. The life-giving word has been spoken. Our Holy Father, the Pope, blesses us, and will send the brief. Everything was sent on the third of this month. M. Regnier was most kind in helping, and our dear chaplain ate nothing all day; he was going backwards and forwards between this and the Bishop's palace. As to our venerable Bishop himself, he wore himself out. Part of the day, Mme. d'Andigné, M. de Neuville, ourselves, our council-sisters, were all writing. Then there were prayers, processions, tears —I never saw a day like it."

But the strain was too great for the Mother's health, and she had a feverish attack. The Sister-Secretary, writing at this time, says—

"Our Mother wanted to write to you herself, to

show her joy, but she is so busy with work of all sorts. And then the parlours! and she had to give you up. She is not well either, and has been feverish for the last week. Her great zeal and courage prevent her from giving in, and she will go on working, directing, and holding the Novitiate every day. Her charity consumes her with a desire of drawing to God souls fervent and perfected in the interior spirit."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was indeed far from being so absorbed in negotiations with Rome for the Generalat that she neglected the interior care of her house. On the 12th January, she had the chapel solemnly blessed by Mgr. Montault, and permission was granted to the Community for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on the first Friday of each month, and an indulgence of forty days to all who should visit the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. Her spirit of faith, by which she saw Jesus Christ Himself in everything done or ordered by the Church, made her avaricious of spiritual favours in the house, and she neglected no means of adding to the treasury of indulgences which she and her daughters amassed for the flock committed to them.

The joy caused by the erection of the Generalat, with its promise of good for the future, was mingled with sorrow in present troubles. The house was visited by sickness, death, and many annoying accidents. "There are times when everything comes upon one at once," she writes: "not a moment's rest; every hour some bad news, all at the same time.

Work stopped, enormous outlay, disturbance of the classes, unkind letters, painful circumstances, doctor, confessors, temptation to souls—a child who ran away and was brought back, disgust of vocation, the poor Superioress ill with fever. Oh! what clouds!

Only those who have borne the weight of the responsibilities of a great house can appreciate the pain which in certain times of trial attends the ministry of authority. To see sickness and death fall upon those belonging to one and to be able to give no relief; to listen to complaints from the discontented; to wipe away the tears of those in discouragement; to meet material difficulties full in the face (money difficulties, which no more yield to strength of will than a wall of brass would); to be constant and firm, and never to show weakness, no matter how weak others may be—such is the duty of the Superioress of a large house; such was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's, and she never failed.

Painful news reached her from Grenoble. Her daughters there were visited by sickness and death. She wrote to them, as their Mother, from her heart, in accents filled with tenderness and Christian consolation—

"MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
Saturday, March 14th, 1835.

"'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.'

"My very dear daughter, in reading your letter telling of the death of our virtuous Sister Mary of the Conception, it is my only consolation to think that her soul

is with God. She rests in His bosom. She will pray for you, my dear daughters. Ah! how often she offered herself a victim for the holy work! With what zeal she started for Grenoble! Let me go, mother—oh! let me go—that I may consume myself in labours there.

"Poor child! I was far from thinking she would so soon enter her eternal rest. How many swords, and all at the same time! But God so wills, and my heart submits. The illness of our beloved Mary of St. Bernard and of St. Frances of Sales pains us to the very heart. Tell them, my dear daughter, how much we shall pray for them, by Communions and other prayers. For our dear dead sister we are going to recite the suffrages of the Order. No doubt, dear sister, you have asked for them at both the foundations. Our sisters weep for the dead, and on account of the sickness and fatigues you have to undergo, my good Mary of St. Louis. They burst into tears yesterday when they thought of it all, and their affection for you comforted us. I fear you will break down. But, after all, one thing is clear: the foundation at Grenoble is very dear to the heart of God, and the devil hates it. What tears, what crosses it has brought us!"

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's tenderness surpassed that of a mother: it owed to her piety an active sweetness which always brought consolation. When her daughter's trials were passed, she abandoned herself to joy and gratitude.

"At last the sun of justice has reappeared. We are experiencing profound peace; we are again singing our songs of joy. Our sick are better; our benefactors have made us several gifts; our young class of penitents is entirely separated from the older; and Mary, our Mother, has really inspired our incomparable Mme. d'Andigné to watch over it.

"And so, my dear daughters, everything is improved, and we feel a holy joy in the depths of our heart, which is the presage of something great."

All the sisters at the house at Angers attested the following extraordinary fact. At the very moment when the Assembly of Cardinals was approving the Generalat, at about seven in the evening, the religious, while at recreation, heard the monastery bell sound three times, for which no natural cause could be discovered.

Mgr. Montault, directly he knew of the decree, sent his Vicar General, M. Regnier, to the Good Shepherd to announce the good news.

"I come to announce a great grace to you," he said to the Community, assembled in the chapter-room; "but be on your guard against pride." Whereupon a young religious, Sister Mary of St. Joseph Regaudiat, who was afterwards to found the monastery in London, rose, and said to him with dignity, "Monsieur the Vicar-general, the Mother who taught us to be great in adversity, has taught us not to be carried away in prosperity."

Although M. Regnier had at first been greatly

opposed to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's course of action, he had recognised afterwards in the Generalat an idea due to Divine inspiration, and became one of the faithful adherents of the Mother and her works.

No sooner was he appointed Bishop of Angoulême, than he manifested the desire to have the Good Shepherd in his episcopal city. He never visited Angers without celebrating the Holy Mass at the Mother House. When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia went to Angoulême, he received her as a father meets a daughter, and showed her the most thoughtful and delicate attention. The Mother, who was very grateful to her superiors, never allowed his feast day to pass without sending him her good wishes and those of her family in religion, and continued this until death. He never left her letters to his secretaries to answer, and, until the end, used to send her his paternal benediction and words of affectionate consolation.

When the decree for the Generalat came, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in order to proclaim to God her gratitude and that of the Community, promised nine processions to a chapel built in the enclosure, and that for three years the office of the Immaculate Conception should be recited. She had the decree itself framed as it came from Rome, signed with the Holy Father's seal, and placed in the choir of the chapel at the Blessed Virgin's feet.

It had been her wish that the Order should retain the dress which they brought from Tours, but the houses of the Refuge disputed this, and it was decided

by the Holy See that some small distinctive mark should be adopted. The Mother therefore added the blue cords, in honour of Our Lady of Fourvière, and had the image of the Good Shepherd engraved on the silver hearts.

Her letters for some time are filled entirely with joy and gratitude, and more expansive than ever towards her daughters in Poitiers, Metz, and Grenoble, who had been partakers of all her fears and hopes for the Generalat. This is the letter to Metz, announcing the good news:—

"From our House of Our Lady
of the Good Shepherd,
February 28th, 1835.

"Very Dear and Beloved Sisters,—To-day, 28th inst., after Holy Mass, we received, with the humblest deepest sense of thankfulness, the announcement that at last the Generalat has been approved at Rome. This is a copy of the letter received:—

"[*Copy.*]—'God be praised, my dear sisters; sing to the Lord a new song; bless His holy name: He has granted your desire. The General Congregation of Cardinals met this morning, Friday, 13th inst., and the decree concerning your Generalat was passed in full vote by all the cardinals. They have had it printed, according to custom, in order that each cardinal may keep a copy. One member of the Congregation looks upon this prompt success as a prodigy.

"'I know the consulters and cardinals have decided to place your Congregation on the same footing as others which depend immediately on the Holy See. You are to have a Cardinal Protector in Rome. The cardinal proposed is entirely favourable to you, and has protected you at every point.

"'Directly you receive the approbation, which we shall forward to you next week, you must write at once to ask him to thank our Holy Father the Pope. You are henceforth to have a Superioress General, and of this no one can now deprive you. The Holy Father also grants an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantine to you all, and to founders and benefactors of Angers, Grenoble, Metz, Poitiers, who shall go to Holy Communion in the octave within the receipt of the decree. In according this indulgence, the Holy Father, with his own hand, wrote the words "*Pro gratia.*" I will send you with this the Decree of Approbation. All persons living in any of your four foundations are included.'—[*Copy ends*].

"Now, my dear sisters, let us give ourselves wholly to thanking the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary for the marvels done for us. Yes, dear sisters, let us be faithful to the graces received. They are precious indeed, since by means of them we shall work with renewed zeal for the salvation of that multitude of souls which, without the Generalat, would have been neglected. Requests for foundations will come from all quarters. Let us for ever bless the

Lord, that He may make us grow from virtue to virtue. Your letter, my dear (Mary of) St. Sophia, came at the same time as the one from Rome."

To this letter was added an account of the reception of the decree, written by the "Sisters of the Council."

"It was just when we were all assembled for Chapter that our very honoured mother came and told us to go in silence, two by two, to the choir, to hear a letter from Rome, and humbly, prostrated before our Divine Lord, we heard the precious words read. Our tears flowed, as you well may suppose, and our sighs rose with vehement love to God. Then our very honoured Mother intoned the Canticle of Thanksgiving and the *Sub Tuum*, and, in gratitude to our Blessed Lady, made a vow that for nine days we should have a procession daily, and that for three years we should daily recite the 'Office of the Immaculate Conception.' Can you join us for the procession only? for the three years' vow is binding on the Mother House alone, the foundations being too overcharged.

"Your thoughtfulness, dear Mary of St. Sophia, has comforted our beloved Mother; and about the feast of St. John you shall have several professed sisters to help you: you do indeed deserve it. The virtues of the faithful flock will bear their own increase. You are making what will prove to be a delightful foundation. We envy you, and our very honoured Mother loves and thinks of you. She approves of everything

you do, and especially of your learning German: it will be invaluable to you. Courage, beloved sisters, so closely united to us! God is helping you, since in so short a time you have already paid off 4000 francs. Our Mother is very much pleased to hear this, and so are our Sisters of the Council, who all send you loving messages. Our Mother is going to write a few words to the dear Superioress, to tell her of her joy. We will also tell you, dear sisters, as a secret, that God has just granted us another great grace in the acquisition of an important house. It is settled that we are to have it. Let us thank God for it. Our very honoured Mother will write more herself.

"*P.S.*—Please let his lordship, your Bishop, know the contents of this letter, and offer him our profound respect, and thank him for all the help he has given in obtaining the Generalat. We shall address all further documents we receive from Rome to his lordship. Please also thank M. Chalandon for his unceasing kindness to our dear foundation at Metz. He is indeed Father of the Generalat! Give affectionate messages from us to all our dear sisters. We are all very thankful, and very pleased that the work is going on so well."

A fortnight later, the Mother wrote what may well be called a hymn of joy to her daughters at the same foundation—

"'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man shall take from you' (our Lord to His Apostles).

"My very dear and much-loved daughters, it was to all of us that our Lord addressed these Divine words. To His Sacred Heart, and to that of His holy Mother's, does our Israel owe release from captivity, and that our tears have been wiped away. Jesus Christ, through His representative on earth, bestowing on us the sacred decree and brief, has restored to the daughter of Sion her beauty and her glory: all the tribes are prostrate in gratitude before the Lord. And you, my beloved daughters, whose fidelity to the work has never been for an instant clouded, will ere now have received the decree from Rome, through your holy Bishop, to whom our Bishop has sent it."

When Cardinal Isla, Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, sent the decree of the Generalat to Mgr. Montault, he sent with it a letter setting forth the good which he hoped would be effected by the new Constitution, and expressing the high esteem felt in Rome for Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her work:—

"ROME, *February 18th*, 1835.

"It does not surprise me that your lordship should labour zealously to obtain for the Congregation of the Sisters at Angers a constitution by which the house there, and the other houses founded from it or in future to be founded, should form one family, all united under the authority of the Superioress at Angers, who is to be, as it were, their Mother. In your opinion, government by a single superior, unity of direction in all matters, will facilitate and render more

fruitful those excellent works of charity which belong to the Institute. I have much pleasure in telling you the very eminent fathers of the Congregation highly eulogised the wisdom, piety, liberality, and generous devotion of Count de la Potherie and Countess d'Andigné, and finally of the Superioress, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia."

The joy of the sisters was equalled only by their sense of gratitude towards the Mother, whose prayers and labours had all centered in the Generalat, which, to her, was the means for the fulfilment of the great work God had given her to do. Even the classes rejoiced and thanked God when the long-desired decree came. The little girls in the Preservation class did not understand what made the Community so happy, and wanted to have it explained to them: a somewhat difficult task, apparently, for they went afterwards about the house, calling out to each other what they believed to be the good news: "Mr. Decree and Mr. Generalat have come from Rome."

When the news was known outside, the congratulations of friends poured in. A kind priest, M. Huron, honorary canon, and parish priest of Ballon, sent Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia 200 francs, to show his interest in the good news.

The houses at Poitiers, Grenoble, and Metz, who all shared the joy and gratitude of the Mother House, had previously sent a gilt heart to Angers, as a token of their inalterable and filial attachment.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, for her part, sent grateful letters to every one in Rome who had helped on the cause. The following letter, from Cardinal Gregorio, is addressed to Sister Mary of St. Chantal de Jesus, Assistant:—

"ROME, *April* 1835.

"MADAME,—I am not surprised to learn, from your letter of the 17th March, that you, and all the Congregation to which you belong, experienced lively joy upon the receipt of the brief from the Sovereign Pontiff in which the monastery of Our Lady of Charity and its rules are approved. The time has at last come when, triumphing over the attempts of those who were your calumniators, your patience and that of your good sisters is crowned with success. To God and His holy Mother you owe this great favour; and I am persuaded that, out of gratitude for a grace which is to bring with it calm and peace to the whole Congregation, you will all strive with redoubled zeal for the maintenance of that perfect order, union, and charity which should always be the valued possession of a religious community, and through which the heart and soul are one in all the members. Pray earnestly to God that this spirit of fervour, which animates you now, may never relax, and that by your example you may always be a model of religion and piety."

A few weeks later, the same cardinal wrote as follows to the Mother: "It is a great consolation to

me to have been chosen, by Divine goodness, to further and consolidate a work which promises the Church advantages so great and precious."

But the enemies of the Good Shepherd did not lay down their arms, even after the decree confirming the Generalat. Letters were written representing to the Pope that the articles originally drawn up had been tampered with, and the good faith of the Congregations surprised into signing others. The Pope appealed to Cardinal Gregorio to know whether he thought the decree ought to be annulled, but the Cardinal had no difficulty in justifying the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, and, after hearing what he had to say, and some reflection, the Pope inquired, "How many bishops are against Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia?" "Thirteen, Holy Father." "And what has she said to defend herself?" "Nothing." "Very well, then," was the Pope's reply, "the right is on her side, and I shall send a brief confirming the decree," which was accordingly done.

But still another stratagem was devised, and those who had opposed the Generalat altogether now asserted that it rightly belonged to the refuge at Tours, on the ground that the house at Angers had been founded from there, and that the rights of the Archbishop of Tours, as metropolitan, to have the Mother House in his own diocese, were superior to the rights of the Bishop of Angers. Mgr. Montblanc wrote to the Pope, setting forth his grievances, but in reply it was pointed out to him that the situation of the refuge at Tours

was in no wise impaired by the favours granted to Angers, as it retained all its old rights, and that the Good Shepherd at Angers was subject to its own diocesan. Gregory XVI., who had been the restorer of the rights and privileges of the Society of Jesus, was perfectly aware that a congregation, consecrated to the sanctification of penitents all over the world, such as the Good Shepherd, was far stronger and could do more effectual work if it depended directly on the Pope like the Jesuits.

Shortly after the brief was despatched, Father Vaures came to Angers, and was received by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her Community with marks of the warmest gratitude for his services to the Generalat. He blessed the new buildings in the monastery and visited the classes, and was made acquainted with the whole organisation, for which he expressed great admiration. He gave the sisters an account of all the various windings through which the cause of the Generalat had passed, and described to them the Pontifical ceremonies. He spoke much of the Pope's kindness, and the interest he took in the Good Shepherd at Angers. He drew a picture of the simple life led by the former monk of Camaldoli, who occupied the chair of Peter as Gregory XVI.—his firmness as a theologian canonist, the jealous guardian of the Church's smallest rights, all of which he looked upon as Divine and inalienable, his fatherly kindness to those whose lives were devoted to God for the welfare of sinners.

He advised them to ask the Pope for a Cardinal Protector, who could be at the same time Superior General of the Institute, and suggested Cardinal Odescalchi, Cardinal Vicar, whose own holiness and zeal for good works made him a warm admirer of the Good Shepherd. Acting on this advice, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote to the Cardinal, who acceded to her request; then she wrote to the Pope, who agreed to his appointment as Protector. And now nothing was wanting to the organisation of the Good Shepherd to enable it to scatter colonies over the whole world. Angers would send out religious, and Rome would protect them with her universal authority.

The providential work for which Mother Pelletier had toiled seemed now to be accomplished. Those whose standpoint was merely human spoke of her as a remarkable woman, who had been clever enough to conceive an ingenious plan and bold enough to carry it out. She had seen that a Catholic work ought to depend directly on the Pope, to escape the fluctuations of local authorities in different dioceses, and that only a Generalat which unites under one superior all the religious and all the convents of an order, can afford proper facilities for the choice of subjects to be sent on missions or nominated to fill various offices.

In following Mother Pelletier's life, one is perhaps most of all struck by the assurance with which she advanced to win for her Order that holy freedom

which the Generalat contains, and by the dauntless ardour with which she fought to gain and defend it, convinced that upon it depended the fecundity of the Institute.

It was a great idea, and a work requiring great courage, but of which the immense extension of the Good Shepherd is an eloquent testimony.

CHAPTER XIII

VISIT TO THE FIRST FOUNDATIONS, 1835

Foundation at St. Florent de Saumur—Joy of Mother Pelletier—M. Bernier—Organisation of the convent—The Mother General's visits to Metz and Grenoble—Misadventures—Return to Angers —Foundation at Nancy.

It was God's will that, in the foundation at St. Florent de Saumur, Anjou should reap the first-fruits of the decree confirming the Generalat. In travelling between Angers and Tours, Mother Pelletier had had frequent opportunities of admiring the Saumurois, a rich beautiful corner of Anjou, lying on the borders of Poitou and Touraine, which has been the scene of many important national events. It is watered by the noble Loire, which here seems almost consciously to revel in showering charms, as it runs its happy course through fruitful and rejoicing islands. The wines of the left bank rival those of Champagne, and the province has always been considered one of the most fertile in France. The very aspect of the country, with its beautiful landscapes, inspires gaiety. The dazzling sunlight, reflected from chalky slopes and sandy shores, decks nature with a festal mantle suggestive of joyousness. It is a district that has

always been frequented by lovers of scenery, and was once covered with great abbeys and rich priories. The ruins of Asnières, the churches of Cunault and Our Lady of Puy, the royal abbey of Fontevrault, still bear witness to the glories of the past. But Saumur had become a stronghold of Protestantism: for eighty years it was the seat of a Protestant university. The Catholics had, however, always held out against heresy: the venerable sanctuary of Our Lady of Ardillers had kept their faith alive. Down to the time of the Revolution, the numerous charitable institutions founded, showed that religion was a living power, and among them the religious order, founded in the seventeenth century by a pious daughter of the people, Jeanne de la Noue, for the instruction of the young and care of the sick, is still the living expression of all that is solid and devoted in the heart of the Saumurois when it is Christian.

It was natural that Mother Pelletier should think of giving Saumur a foundation. The spiritual need was great, and such isolated attempts as had been made since the Revolution to provide an asylum for penitent women had all failed. M. Bernier, curé of St. Peter's Parish, had, since 1832, taken special interest in this part of his flock, and was anxious to place upon a larger footing an existing work for poor little girls, by handing it over to Augustinian nuns; his plan had, however, been hitherto thwarted by the civil authorities.

While he was still debating as to the best methods

of realising his charitable designs, a letter from Mother Mary of Saint Euphrasia reached him, telling him she wished to found a house at Saumur, and begging him to visit the monastery at Angers, to learn what her intentions were. He started accordingly for that place, on the evening of the 28th May 1835, and had an interview with her, in which it was decided the foundation should be made.

M. Bernier, like the Mother herself, had been brought up among traditions of the Vendeen war. He had an active mind, great penetration, and a solid practical faith, which was warmed by ardent charity for the conversion of sinners. All who came into contact with him esteemed him, became sensible of his authority, and adopted his ideas. This ascendency over others was very remarkable. Beneath an air and manner of the utmost distinction, was hidden an iron will, capable of submitting to contradiction, or even disgrace, without complaint, in what he believed to be a just cause. His priestly zeal was ably served by his gifted speech. When he preached, it is said, the officers of the cavalry school always came to St. Peter's to hear him. His style, after the pattern of his mind, was clear, and so precise that, like steel, it pierced his hearers, but his power was greatest when out of the intense heat of his own charity he spoke of that virtue.

On his return from Angers, he first set himself to beg from house to house for the foundation, next to look for a suitable building, and, having found one,

had it forthwith prepared for the sisters. Finally, he tried to induce the manager of an existing orphanage to hand it over to Mother Pelletier's daughters.

The building which had naturally attracted his notice was the old abbey of St. Florent-le-Jeune, which possessed monastic associations, and was pleasantly and healthily situated on the banks of the rivers Loire and Thouet. It had been formerly known as "the Beauty of Anjou," from its magnificence, and had been famous for its schools, and, in remote ages, for its tapestry, of which the specimens still extant are the oldest known to archæologists. Of the three great blocks which formerly composed the monastery but one remained, and it also was threatened with destruction, when M. Bernier interposed to prevent such an act of vandalism.

"It is the glory of religion," he wrote in a circular, "in the days of distress to know how to rescue from destruction the beautiful monuments which religion raised in days of splendour; to be able to impose limits upon devastation; to utilise ruins which religion was helpless to prevent. Misunderstood in the present day, but admirable in relation to art, the Church is still more admirable in relation to morals. This grand edifice, once the home of great men, with its vast courts, its orchards, its elm hedges, its delicious groves, is destined now, under the Church's auspices, to become the home of young women exposed to the contagion of vice, and of those who, having fallen victims to it, now desire to abandon their disorders."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, whose thirst for God's

glory and the good of souls was insatiable, did not hesitate a moment when M. Bernier proposed the acquisition of the Abbey. His support and that of M. Regnier were enough in her eyes to guarantee success. She wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers as follows: "God is admirable in His designs over us. Oh, how profoundly it humbles me! God has put nto the heart of M. Regnier and M. Bernier to undertake a magnificent foundation at Saumur. What I should wish, my beloved daughters, is, that all of us should unite to purchase a grand Benedictine abbey there is there, sixty bushels of ground,[1] enclosure walls twenty feet high, and far beyond others, every other advantage, many, many souls to save. We are told the house will be one of our most flourishing. Ah, my daughter! let us pray! Assemble your sisters, and tell them all that I think about it, for you know it all."

She rejoiced in the idea of restoring to the Church a former abbey, in bringing our Lord back to the place where, for many centuries, He had dwelt. Devotion to this object, the restoration of Divine worship in sanctuaries desecrated by the Revolution, was life-long with her; it gave her intense happiness to know that through her instrumentality the lamp before the altar, extinguished by impious hands, should again be lighted. She looked upon that little lamp as a sentinel adoring our Lord for her, and praying to Him in the place He had chosen for

[1] A bushel of ground is as much as a bushel of grain will sow.

adoration and prayer until wicked men drove Him from it. In one of the "Instructions," she said, "Oh, how my heart rejoices when a new lamp is lighted in some new church of the Congregation, or in an old monastery, battered by the storms of evil days and given up to profane purposes for years, which it is our privilege to restore to its original destiny. To have thus witnessed the relighting of the lamp at St. Florent before our Lord is one of my greatest consolations, and whenever I go to that dear house to visit our sisters, and stand in the brightness of that holy light, joy inundates my soul."

Ancient sanctuaries attract the faithful Christian. The Christian pilgrim loves to visit old shrines and catacombs, places hallowed by the prayers and blessings of former generations. The sense of the communion of saints is more vivid in localities where saints themselves have been. This affection for monuments which transmit the Church's tradition is a mark of the Catholic spirit, just as the absence of veneration for what our forefathers in the faith founded and venerated betokens flippancy.

After a visit to St. Florent, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, by Mgr. Montault's advice, purchased the abbey and sent five religious there. They were received by M. Bernier, who had bought them some furniture, and showed them many kind attentions. They arrived on 31st July 1835, and the little colony set to work at once to restore order where the Revolution had left heaps of ruin.

Eastern nations, whether savage or Mahometan, are all struck by the order which reigns in Christian communities, which is one of the exterior marks of their Divine mission. They see that it pervades the lives and houses of Christian religious, and it is one of the first things to attract them. The reign of Satan is manifested by the exterior disorder of his subjects. No Mahometan house is ever orderly, while order is one of the striking features in that of the Christian religious. Here are nuns, just come to a ruined old abbey desecrated in the Revolution ; they are like a swarm of busy bees, directed by their queen, as they arrange, order, put everything into its right place, and produce harmony out of the confusion found on arrival. Their first care is to reproduce the image of the Mother House, to apply their Mother's lessons, and imitate her example. They are like the ancient Romans, who always tried to reproduce the exact model of Rome, their country, in the structure and organisation of their camps.

For years the colony at St. Florent, instigated by Mother Pelletier, continued to clear away rubbish, until at length they succeeded in giving back to the old abbey, if not its former splendour, at least its orderly exterior. An abbot's croizer, altar cruets, and several tombs were found among the ruins. Once more the arches of the private chapel resounded with God's praises, re-echoing the sisters' voices, and those of the children committed to their care.

By dint of hard work and patience, the nuns cleared

out the choir of a chapel of the twelfth century, and restored its primitive beauty. It is a gem of Plantagenet architecture, a style which gave Anjon its first and best *chef-d'œuvre*. The tall slender columns, resembling those of the old mosques; the boldly executed domed roofs, covering the whole nave, and recalling the debased Byzantine dome, suggest the thought that the architects of the Plantagenet princes accompanied their Crusader masters to the Holy Land, and imbibed the spirit of the East.

The sisters at Metz and Grenoble were very anxious for a visit from their Mother, in order to show her what they were doing, and to be advised by her about contemplated changes and additions. She wrote to the Superioress at Metz, on the 27th March 1835—

"'Behold I come, that I may do Thy will, O Lord.'

"My very dear, my beloved Sisters,—This morning your affectionate letter came at last: it comforts us more and more, showing, as it does, that your devotedness is always growing like the Divine charity, in which we are one. Your account of your difficulties about repairs, and your entreaty to us to visit you, remind me that kind M. Chalandon also wrote telling me a visit would be necessary. I spoke first to the good God about it, and then to our dear sisters of the Council, who are closely united to you, and who besought me, on their knees, not to refuse you. Another thing has also helped my decision: it seems certain

that I shall have to go to Grenoble next month. The foundation has grown so much, and our poor sisters have to deal with matters on so large a scale, that we cannot refuse the visit that, for the last year, they have been asking for. Kind good Mme. d'Andigné will be our escort, and I really require such a companion. We think of returning by Paris and going straight thence to you, my beloved sisters. It is for the glory of God only, and by obedience, for I am very sensible of my own weakness in all respects, and it is frightening. But your prayers, and the joy of seeing you all again, will be my strength, and, putting my trust in God, I will go with courage. I think when I see the places, I shall be better able to decide, and shall understand more clearly how many, and what kinds of subjects will best suit Metz, and so things will be more wisely decided. Write, dear sisters, and tell us what you think of our coming about the middle of May, which would be somewhere near the time. Later on, I foresee that we shall be overwhelmed with work. Meantime we will pray much.

"I rejoice to hear of your having at once adopted the dear cords of our Blessed Lady: we all received them also, kneeling at the altar full of consolation. Our peace is great. May the Lord give you also His peace, and the grace of His love, according to the very sincere desire of your much attached,

"Mary of St. Euphrasia."

The necessities of the houses at Metz and Grenoble

weighed on her more and more heavily. By day she discussed them with her council, by night dreamt of them; but excess of work in her own convent retarded her journey. She wrote to Metz, on the 5th June 1835:—

"Oh! my dear daughters, for many nights I have been thinking over what to do for the best for you. You know my heart, and that I would come at once, if it were possible. The greatest proof of love you can give us, in these beginnings of the Generalat, is to wait for subjects, and when they are professed, to help us to form the younger ones, taking them at once. Later on, things may go better, please God. It may still be a long time before we get through all this extra work. But, indeed, my dear daughters, I feel what yours is also, and wish I could relieve you; but six weeks will soon pass. It distresses me to have to put off my journey again on account of the overwork in the Mother House.

"Our dear sisters, Mary of St. Augustine, St. John of the Cross, St. Cyr, Mary of the Angels are learning Italian, in preparation for the foundation at *Rome!* Just imagine how we shall miss them. *Fiat.* We are ready to make the sacrifice, and immolate ourselves for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But, my dear sisters, of course without you I can do nothing. Our dear Assistant is better. Another miracle! Good-bye, my very dear daughters. The four, not forgetting our good Sister Tourière, are all in my heart at once, and in the union of the Sacred

Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and joined to all our sisters, in loving you with sincere affection. I am your devoted, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

But days and weeks succeeded one another, and still the Mother was kept at Angers by her various works, and, to satisfy the love of her maternal heart, was obliged to content herself with writing to Metz for accounts of all that happened in the convent and of its growth :—

"FROM OUR MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
July 10*th*, 1835.

"'Come to Me, all you that labour and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you.'

"You are overloaded with work, my good Mary of St. Sophia, and I am anxious about you. I cannot tell you, my daughter, how unhappy I am when I have no news of you, and yet how well I understand that you have more to do than you can get through. To God do we raise our sighs, our prayers, our desires, that it may please Him to send you relief. We bless Him also, for the great graces vouchsafed to our dear house at Metz. The letter received this morning from our dear (Mary of) St. Angela, telling of the great help our Lord has granted, rejoiced me. You urge me so to go to you, my dear daughters, that there seems no end to the reasons why it is necessary. If M. Chalandon will still be there in August, I think I can go then. Oh, what consolation it will

be on both sides. But meantime, my beloved daughter, we are expecting news: all the details of the ceremony of blessing the chapel and house. You know our hearts, my dearest daughters. Write when you have a moment to spare. We all think a great deal about Metz, and we tenderly embrace each of you. The marvellous dealing of God in the Generalat surpasses description, but I don't write about it now, because I am sure your mind is filled with your own holy duties, laid upon you by obedience. Let us hold together in unity, until death, by great detachment from everything, belonging to God and our holy work only, and ready to fly to the ends of the earth if obedience should so order.

"Poitiers and Metz are perfectly united to the Mother House, happily! for indeed were it otherwise I should die of grief. Good-bye, my daughter. In the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I am, with tender affection, your attached, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

A week later she was writing again to Metz:—

"'And the Spirit of the Lord was upon them.'

"Oh, my beloved daughter, how greatly do I desire that the Spirit of the Lord should direct us in all His ways. Very early this morning I started out to look for you and met you. I sent to the post, my daughter, being anxious about you, and you may suppose, how glad I was when I read your letter. Now it is night when I write to you. No, my good Mary of St. Sophia, your details do not weary me.

Ah! if you only knew the rest they are to me in the midst of my own work.

"You would not believe what pleasure they give our sisters. It will be a great joy to see, when in your midst, the wonders the Lord has done for this dear foundation. Your account of the gifts that have been made is admirable. God, through Mary and the holy angels, will finish the work; the debt on the house will be paid; and it will be filled and made beautiful. You will see it all. Ah! how right you are in sparing our dear Mother House, which has, indeed, undergone many privations. You know all about it. I think a time will come when we shall be more able to follow the dictates of our heart. But we have not yet got so far as that, so let us wait peacefully for God's time. He knows how dear to us you are, and if you were in any trouble there is nothing we would not do; and never, my dear daughters, shall you be forsaken. We pray constantly for our three foundations. Saumur will be founded August 1st. Try to give a communion for it.

"I don't tell you any of our news, because I think you know all about us. The whole thing is a miracle! Ah! what do we not owe to our Blessed Lady! We are simply inundated with graces, my daughters. Sometimes we have our crosses too, and good ones!

"Our six first novices are to be professed on Friday the 24th inst. Good-bye, my dear daughter. Believe in my most tender affection, in the love of the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Your attached,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

At the outset of the Institute, her correspondence seems to have been Mother Pelletier's best recreation. She is present, as it were, everywhere, by means of it, and takes part in everything done in each of her houses.

On the 26th July she wrote to Metz again :—

"'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.'

"What pleasure your letters give me, my beloved daughters! In proportion to the crosses we have had, so in proportion, and, even beyond, are the delight which our foundations give us—holy joy in Jesus Christ, who is the very life of the work. So many miracles all at once, my very dear daughters! Good things showered on Metz, as your charming and most *submissive* letters tell. Oh, my daughter, what pleasure you have given me! Your devotedness to the Mother House, my good Mary of St. Sophia, comforts us more than any wealth. Mary's blessing upon us is plainly visible, for the Nancy foundation is quite decided: we have just heard again a most favourable letter. The foundation at Saumur is fixed for next Saturday. My dear daughters, if possible go to Holy Communion for it, I beg of you. And as for yourselves, my much loved sisters, soon, by God's grace, I shall see you. I want so very much to see good M. Chalandon, to whom I send my respects; that, if the heat is at all bearable, we shall leave this August 9th, and shall hope to arrive in Metz on the 13th, with one of our sisters; otherwise we shall start on the 22nd, in which case I shall miss seeing M. Chalandon. But what

else can I do? The heat is excessive, and I feel it would not be possible for me to bear a journey of 400 leagues, for from Metz we are going to Grenoble.

"Mme. d'Andigné, who is kind enough to be our companion, is so far from strong that I dare not venture to take her there. Our chaplain is coming also. Send us a line, dear (Mary of) St. Sophia. Mind you keep the two postulants you spoke of for us. The lame one need not be anxious: she will be received, and the little angel of thirteen too. I wish there were more, my daughter, for we want subjects: this is our greatest cross just now. Let us pray and pray.

"I am very glad to hear that the Jesuit Fathers will direct our dear penitents. How grateful we should be to God! I must leave you, my beloved sisters. We all embrace you, and press you to our hearts."

The time had come at last when Mother Pelletier was able to carry out her plan of visiting her houses at Metz and Grenoble, and setting their affairs in order. In thus visiting her monasteries, she was fulfilling the Sovereign Pontiff's intentions, expressed in Articles III. of both the decree and brief on the Generalat. She was also gratifying her own desire to see her dear daughters. Before leaving the Mother House, she settled everything, so that a good spirit might reign during her absence. In the Novitiate, which now comprised fifty members, she appointed two Surveillantes—one for the choir, the other for the

lay novices, whose office it was to keep up the spirit of piety and devotion, and to write letters to the Mother, giving her an account of all that happened.

It was at the end of August 1835 that she set out on her journey with M. Mainguy, chaplain to the Mother House, and Mme. d'Andigné, who intended to pay all the expenses of the journey. She went first to Metz, having hurried her departure out of pity for the poor penitents there, whom the religious were not allowed to accept.

She had so much the more merit in hastening her departure, because she would very much have liked to have had some conversation with the Rev. Father Gloriot, S.J., who had written to tell her he was coming soon to see her about some matters of importance. He was very much disappointed not to meet her, but, when told the reason for her hurried departure, he said, "The souls she has gone to seek are well worth the sacrifice."

Upon her arrival at Metz, she went straight to her sisters in their new monastery. It was an old convent of Poor Clares, in a state of semi-ruin since the Revolution, and required great repairs.

The Vicar-general, M. Chalandon, whom the Mother saw, agreed that so soon as this was completed, penitents might be received. This being the principal object for which she had come to Metz, she left, feeling very grateful to M. Chalandon, who remained always a zealous protector of the Community.

During her visitations to the different houses,

Mother Pelletier often had struggles with over-kind benefactors, persons who wanted her daughters to have only pleasant, remunerative work, among little girls of ordinary condition, whom, like the teaching orders, they could educate, arguing that such a religious vocation was one of the most beautiful. But they did not understand the sisters of the Good Shepherd, who have but one end, and that the highest—the sanctification of souls. They deal with a class less attractive, perhaps, to nature, but, for that very reason, devotedness to it is so much the more glorious.

Mother Pelletier of all vocations had chosen the most meritorious. A poor girl begins life believing in happiness, where nothing but pain and suffering await her; in the time of desolation she seeks in vain for pity or a home among her own relations or friends, meeting only with rebuffs from those to whom money is often the paramount interest; but if she goes to the Good Shepherd and knocks at the door, it is instantly opened. She is received and welcomed, either by the mother or her daughters, and placed in that Fold which is the one place on earth where such an one is always sure of a kind motherly reception.

This, the one purpose of the Institute, Mother Pelletier always strenuously resisted any attempt to change or divert.

From Metz she travelled towards Grenoble, visiting Nancy on the way, to see the Bishop about a foundation. She arrived at Grenoble at the close of August,

wearied with journeying in diligences, which at that time were very badly equipped. She came like an angel of consolation among her daughters, in the midst of troubles which had lasted without intermission for two years. The presence of her two companions filled their cup of joy: it was like home itself come to pay them a visit. They were still living at St. Robert's House. M. Mainguy was the guest of the parish priest of St. Egrève, Mme. d'Andigné, of Viscountess Bardonenche, the great-granddaughter of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and grand-niece of Mme. de Soyecourt, formerly Prioress of the Carmelites in Paris. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia saw Mgr. de Bruillard, who was struck by her wisdom in finding the way out of difficulties. Her visit brought peace to her sisters. She called upon Mme. de Bardonenche, and made the acquaintance of Mlle. de Hinnisdal, a connection of the Bardonenche family. This lady afterwards came several times to Angers to see the Mother, with whom she formed a holy friendship.

The return party was larger than the one that came. It was augmented by the Superioress of the convent at Grenoble and four postulants. At Lyons, through which they passed, Mother Pelletier visited Notre Dame de Fourvière, and assisted at a Mass said for the travellers by M. Chalandon, who was passing through Lyons also.

A visit was also paid to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where both Sister Mary of St. Joseph Regaudiat

Comte de la Potherie de Neuville.

and Sister Mary of the Annunciation had sisters, who were religious.

The start from Lyons took place at ten o'clock in the evening, and, much to the vexation of the party, instead of being taken, as they expected, by the more direct road, through Burgundy, they were taken through Auvergne. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was always a nervous traveller, and the difficulties of the mountainous roads made her even more timid than usual; besides, a great many small mishaps occurred.

They reached Clermont at 4 A.M., and started again at 9 A.M., leaving M. Mainguy behind. He had gone to visit the curious petrifications in the neighbourhood, and did not overtake his seven fellow-travellers until the following diligence.

At Puy de Dôme the Mother walked a long distance: she was afraid of the carriage falling over the precipices, as had nearly happened once before with a drunken driver. In her alarm, she made a vow to Mary Immaculate.

At Limoges another small mishap occurred. No diligence would leave for twenty-four hours. At length, however, Poitiers was reached, and there the Mother was greeted with the warmest welcome from good Mother Mary of St. Stanislaus, who was tenderly attached to her, and had always kept up an intimate correspondence with her.

The sisters at Poitiers had not expected a visit from Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and were consequently so much the more delighted. One can hardly

imagine their feelings when, at five in the morning, the travellers knocked so unexpectedly at their convent door. The Prioress was so overjoyed that she seemed not to know how to do enough to give them a worthy reception. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia arrived tired out with the journey, but was soon restored by supernatural consolation; for, in the convent, she found the fervour of early days, in the vigour with which the rule was observed, in spite of the smallness of the house and consequent privations. All the usual exercises could not be carried out, for in some of the rooms there was no space for them. The great joy of seeing her daughters so fervent refreshed the Mother before she started for St. Florent de Saumur. Here she found beautiful buildings, large enclosure, but coldness and neglect on the part of the townspeople. At Poitiers the zeal of the sisters was sustained by the alms and sympathy of benefactors; but here the religious had to bear their own burden and were very poor. But they also were very fervent, very devoted to the Mother House, and the visit renewed their courage and revived their hearts.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was absent a month from Angers, and to the community it seemed much longer. Never did a Mother's return give more joy to a family, for no Mother had ever expended more zeal in training her children after the image of her own heart. All rejoiced in her return, and she was welcomed with verses composed for the occasion, the house itself being decorated with garlands of flowers.

No sooner had Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia returned to her usual course of life in the monastery, than she resumed those familiar discourses by which she was forming the religious of the infant Congregation in the virtues of their holy state. She taught them especially love for the Institute, and devotedness to sinful souls. She constantly repeated, "My dear daughters, learn to forget yourselves for the salvation of souls. Love this house, because it belongs to our Lord and the Blessed Virgin, who deign to bestow on us new graces every day. If you should not support all its interests earnestly, it would show want of gratitude for their benefits, and would be dishonouring their house."

She identified herself more and more with the Institute, and had neither desire nor thought but for it; and, aware that in such sentiments as these lie the strength and life of a community, she wanted all her daughters to enter into them. The love of the religious for his order is his love for the supernatural family God has given him.

The strength of will congregated in a community formed on such a model, is multiplied in proportion to the number of members, and the individual strength of each is increased a hundredfold by the union of all hearts in Divine charity.

When trial came, her daughters' union was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's support. Sickness fell on the house in October 1835, and death soon was busy. There were twenty-five ill among the novices and

penitents. The Mother's heart was torn by grief, but she had the consolation of witnessing holy deaths and growing fervour in the Community. She made these trials an occasion for urging the sisters to piety, for she was persuaded that the prayers and merits of one part of the Community relieved the sufferings of the other. "Oh, my dear daughters, be then very good, regular, fervent, interior, submissive, and I am sure you will cure our sick."

Her very lively faith in the communion of saints inspired some of her most eloquent utterances when urging her daughters to pray, suffer, sacrifice themselves for one another. She liked resting on the thought that, in the great Christian family, the merits of each member partake of the universal efficacy of the merits of Jesus Christ, and do their work of expiating, redeeming, and bearing fruit. The least of her daughters might, in this manner, serve the whole community by her merits. She entered naturally into the fraternal spirit of the old sodalities which used to exist among communities for union of prayers.

She also had great confidence in the suffrages of the saints, and warmly thanked the sisters at Poitiers when they sent her a relic of St. Radegonde, to whose protection, and the sisters' prayers, she attributed the cessation of the epidemic, which had carried off from her beloved flock six victims. With what joy she hailed the disappearance of the malady. "After these crosses and trials," she wrote, "we are beginning to

breathe in peace. The Lord is causing some rays of His love and favour to shine on us."

One of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's greatest joys in 1835 was the foundation of the house at Nancy. An honorary canon, M. Jacques Marguet, reflecting upon the past years of his ministry, while singing God's praises in the Divine office, was struck by the need of a refuge for souls desiring to do penance for past disorders. He knew the number to be not inconsiderable, and the train of his reflections led to his resolving to found such a refuge at Nancy. He opened his heart to his bishop, a man of truly apostolic spirit, Mgr. de Forbin-Janson, who hailed the idea, and at once promised an annual subscription of 1200 francs out of his private purse. When the subject was first broached to the Mother, she wrote to her daughters, "My beloved daughters, do you know that the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary have made another foundation?"

And, through easy paths, did Jesus and Mary guide the way, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's great auxiliary being charity. On the 30th November she sent three religious to make the foundation. They found open hearts waiting to receive them, and help came from various quarters. On the way, they saw Mgr. de Forbin-Janson in Paris, who was detained there by political business. At Nancy, the Superioress at the Convent des Oiseaux, the Rev. Mother Sophia, gave them hospitable entertainment, and showered kindness on them. Mme. Pauline de Faillonnet, the

General Superioress of the Sisters of Christian Doctrine (a Nancy congregation), helped them to start their housekeeping, and gave them clothes for their children. In speaking of the Good Shepherd as a neighbouring community, she said, "Oh! how happy we are to have them near us! What we have not been able to do, what we were not worthy to do well, these good sisters will make up: their work will be one of reparation for our defects. May God bless them, and may He be blessed in them a thousand fold. Let us be thoroughly persuaded, my daughters, that we are insufficient, that there are souls upon whom the best of educations has not the slightest effect, who must pass through all the hideousness of vice before they learn to love the Divine beauty. Oh, mystery of mercy! when I think of holy Magdalen, I cannot describe what my veneration is for a truly converted sinner."

Mgr. Donnet, the future Archbishop of Bordeaux, at that time coadjutor at Nancy, received the new colony coldly. He was prejudiced against the Good Shepherd. But when he saw the religious at work, his opinion promptly underwent a change, and he became the auxiliary of Mgr. de Forbin-Janson and Canon Marguet in helping them to carry out their great work. When the house was bought, it was he who said the first Mass, and preached at the ceremony of inauguration.

This foundation was regarded by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia as a special grace of Providence, and a manifest token of the good to be expected from the Generalat. As God was plainly facilitating these first

endeavours, it showed that the Good Shepherd was pleasing to Him as a means of salvation to souls.

Her own earnestness and ardour for the extension of the Order never flagged or varied. "What a foundation at Nancy!" she writes; "we can only marvel at it! Pray for the holy work which God increases day by day. More new work for us, and field upon field opens out before our sight. Dear Generalat! how many souls it will bring to our Holy Mother the Church. Never were our foundations doing so well."

One has but to listen to her to feel that she saw the whole world lying open to her zeal, and that she felt a Divine inspiration to make her apostolate embrace it to its utmost limits. She had the most perfect confidence in her mission. Hearing that the Archbishop of Tours was trying to prevent a foundation in Rome, she hardly gave the matter a thought. "What can man do against God," she wrote: "our hope is in God? The good Master has chosen the vilest instrument to do the holiest work. He carries me hither and thither." Her eagerness to commence foundations, when God showed the way, was only equalled by her joy when she saw them fairly started and prospering. "Rejoice in the Lord," she wrote to the sisters at Poitiers: "Nancy is safe. On the feast of the Presentation of our Divine Mother, every cloud was scattered, every difficulty smoothed. The Mother General of the Christian Doctrine heaped kindness and presents on our sisters. They are in an ecstasy of delight in God. Ah! thank Him. You know we

are wanted now in Belgium too, and the Jesuit fathers ask us to go to Amiens. God does it all. We have also plenty of subjects."

She longed that all her daughters should share her joys and desires for the extension of the apostolate. Each prayed for all; each rejoiced in the success and progress of the others. When a favour is bestowed on Nancy, the Mother General's heart thrills with delight, and her sisters at Poitiers, St. Florent, Grenoble, and Metz all rejoice with her. How beautiful is charity which enlarges the soul, making it capable of joys that the world neither knows nor understands.

But, as we have already mentioned, Nancy did not escape the common lot of all Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's foundations: at the beginning there were trials. Some of the ecclesiastical authorities were prejudiced against the Generalat, and at first difficulties were raised about dependence on Angers, and attempts made to treat the foundation as independent. While this state of things lasted, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was constantly sending words of firm affectionate counsel. The Superioress she had appointed was Mother St. John of the Cross, one of the religious who had come with her from Tours. The letters she writes to her overflow with affection.

"From our Monastery at Angers,
November 19th, 1835.

"'Sion, praise thy God.'

"My beloved Daughter,—We did indeed praise God and shed tears too, on receiving your two letters from

Paris and Metz, and those of our dear Mary of St. Benedict and Mary of St. Margaret. Oh, what marvels! Oh, my God! it is overwhelming! As for myself, I may say, like the Apostle, 'You are my joy and my crown.' I wish the Bishops knew of Monseigneur de Nancy's admirable, generous conduct. Yes! it is indeed only for the work's sake that God does such marvels: we are only an echo repeating the sounds of His everlasting will. Oh, let us be saints! Dearest daughters, we pray unceasingly for you, and follow your every step with our heart. I am at Nancy seeking you just when perhaps you are writing to me. I hope our Blessed Lady will give you the letter I am writing to the Mother Superioress. Please give her and her good daughters our respects and most sincere thanks. Pay the postage of the letter, my dear daughter. I was afraid of delaying it by doing so. I am longing for a letter from you at Nancy itself: it will tell us many things we do not know. We should much like to have the portrait, and some small pictures, of the Bishop of Nancy. Please give my respects to Monseigneur the coadjutor.

"Here, my dear daughters, everything is going on well. All our sick are better, except (Mary of) St. Anastasia. (Mary of) St. Vincent gets up, but is very weak; (Mary of) St. Basil is well again; poor (Mary of) St. Bartholomew is sinking. Penitents come from all quarters, even Tours. Charity makes us receive them without any fears. Now a few words about God's work of love for souls, the dear Generalat. We have

just had a letter from Rome which has made us very happy. It is from his Eminence, Cardinal Odescalchi, who speaks like a tender father. He says the foundation will be made, but not just yet; and we feel sure of it.

"Now for something else. A Belgian bishop has written asking for a foundation. We were really speechless when we read his letter, and the sisters of the Council were so overcome at the sight of God's designs in our regard that they could not take any dinner. Monseigneur d'Angers said, 'I will not refuse such a work.' But we, dear sisters, what are we to do? Pray, ask God, with tears, for more labourers. We want at least forty more subjects, and meantime we will sacrifice ourselves and accept, shall we not? I am still very sorry we did not see the Bishops of Verdun and Chalons. Dear Mary St. John of the Cross, help us; send us good subjects; make foundations from north to south. I am so glad to hear what you tell me about Metz. Poor children! I love them more and more."

The foundation at Nancy was not fairly established when the opponents of the Generalat made the attempt to render it independent of Angers, and to turn it into a House of Refuge with its own novitiate and professions. But the Superioress, Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross, was too much attached to Angers, too much convinced of the advantages of the Generalat to allow her allegiance to be shaken. She was, moreover, receiving letter after letter from the Mother General.

"*November 22nd*, 1835.

"Your letter has come. What crosses, Oh, my beloved daughter! I felt they were coming for three days beforehand while in prayer. Oh, how right of you to tell me everything. We conjure you, my very dear daughters, for the love of God and our holy work, by holy obedience, to tell Monseigneur de Nancy that you hold irrevocably to the Mother House, and will have neither professions nor novitiate. Tell him also that, if the work is displeasing to him, it would grieve us beyond measure to go on with it. Do not fear, my daughter. You know Rome and Belgium are both proposed to us. Don't mention this, but act with holy liberty. You and Sisters St. Margaret and St. Benedict shall go to foreign lands and make a foundation. Oh, my well-beloved daughters, be firm: it is the devil opposing us with what power he has left! Oh Cross! dear Cross! our desire is to cherish and love thee! Yes—pain, suffering, these are our portion; but rather die than yield. Think of all the souls stretching out their arms for help! My poor children, your station now is Calvary, and my soul is with you there. Do not buy the house at Turique, my daughter, if you see they do not want to have you. You are the eldest daughter of the work, and we have entire confidence in you, and should like you to be head of it all. As for Metz, do not be uneasy. I shall dismiss two subjects, and gently correct the other small abuses by God's grace. I am going to write, too, to Saumur and Grenoble.

The one essential is devotedness, and yours comforts me for everything. Then the great kindness of the Mother General of the Christian Doctrine touches me. Tell her how much I feel it, and of my respect for her. The worst part of leaving Nancy would be losing Mgr. de Janson: he is so good. Then souls. But, on the other hand, I picture you forsaken, in the cold, the snow, and, worse than all, calumniated. It is heart-breaking, but we shall pray and pour ourselves out to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I enclose a copy of the brief. Show it to Mgr. Donnet. Tell him very respectfully that you hold irrevocably by this brief, and that, if his lordship feels any repugnance to receiving you in the spirit of the Generalat, you are ready to come away. Our chapter here beseeches you not to fear anything for yourself personally. You may always count upon our support.

"Adieu, my dearly loved daughters, adieu. My place is at the foot of the Cross. I am longing for news of you. Do not buy the house until you have told the whole truth. Adieu. I embrace and love you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Your attached,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

"*P.S.*—My daughter, my dear daughter, for yourself, what is it you fear? And if they did recognise you, are you less than our enemies? Jesus Christ is your strength. Oh, I beseech you, speak the truth out with dignity, and do not tremble."

When duty and the maintenance of right are at

stake, nothing is so strong as the will of a soul given to God, especially when acting in obedience to the superiors to whom obedience has been promised. Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross obeyed Mother Pelletier, and by so doing overcame opposition, and obtained leave to found the house at Nancy in dependence on Angers. The Mother General hastened to write to her.

"FROM OUR MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
November 25th, 1835.

"'The Lord hath done great things to us: and holy is His name.'

"What graces obtained through Mary, my beloved daughter! Your letter, written on the Day of the Presentation, has restored us to life. Oh, what have we not suffered! Knowing what trouble you were in, we could only lift our sighs to God: prayers, processions, Communions, Holy Mass—all these means were employed. Our sisters were much hurt by the Bishop Coadjutor's words, and M. de Neuville felt them so deeply that he was all for your immediate return to our earthly *Paradise*, where peace reigns. But now the Star of the Sea is shining, and the shadows of night have disappeared. You have a house, my beloved daughters. I think you have peace, and I can rest at last: for two nights I could not sleep. It is also a comfort that you have promised to give us further details. Ah, how we look for the arrival of the post. We should have written before, my dear daughter, but I did not know how you were situated. By this time

you must have had two letters from us, and you shall not be without again. Are you soon going to Turique? Does it seem promising in the way of help? Tell us everything, my dearest daughter. Write very fully. You know my heart.

"Fear nothing, little flock: the Divine Shepherd is with us. Oh yes! the dear foundation at Nancy will succeed for the glory of God, and for the holy work. There are letters already about the foundation at Amiens. Truly, my dear daughters, God's designs are unfathomable. Who can sound them? The cloud, at first so tiny, we see now spreading all over France. Let us be Xaviers, for the noblest mission is reserved for us. Try to have the best of foundations for penitents at Nancy: that is our object.

"Adieu, my very dear daughter, adieu! My sisters send you messages of encouragement and affection. We sing the *Te Deum*, and continue the processions for you. Mme. D'Andigné, M. de Neuville, and our chaplain all think much about you, and beg you to be firm in God. Oh, my dear sister, how much I wish you would speak out the whole truth to the Bishop Coadjutor, as you did to Mgr. de Janson. I have business of many kinds to get through, and want to get this off by the next mail. I have been rather feverish lately, but it will be nothing, I think. Anxiety about your position had much to do with it. Our sick are better. We love all three of you tenderly. Your Mother and attached,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

In proportion to her suffering about the difficulties created in establishing her daughters at Nancy, so was now her joy in learning that the way was smoothed, and that a large house had been bought at Turique for the Good Shepherd. She now looked upon Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross as a St. Xavier, the zealous missionary of the Institute.

"MONASTERY OF ANGERS,
November 27, 1835.

"'Children of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God.'

"MY DEAR DAUGHTERS,—Your four letters have filled my soul to the brim with consolation, dear faithful ones, all three of you. Oh no, dear (Mary of) St. John of the Cross, you shall not be scolded. Come always, as the Xavier of our company; come and come again. I read three of your letters to the Chapters. Our sisters are so full of the miraculous success of your missions that our joy is perfect. Beautiful foundation of Nancy, crowned now by the Cross. We cannot cease speaking of the kindness shown by Mother General of the Christian Doctrine. She is God's angel, charged to keep us in all our ways. Please, dear sister, give her many grateful messages from me, and also to good Sister Louisa. We are writing letters of thanks ourselves to M. Poirel and M. Majeote. The latter gave us a most detailed account of the acquisition of the holy tribe. Oh yes! my dear daughter, of course your name had to appear in the deed. I told you to do it. We

cannot say too much about all M. Marguet's kindness: we feel it deeply; he truly is a father to us. Still, my dear daughter, wait until the Bishop-Coadjutor suggests him for Superior. Do not ask for him. Say, 'Monseigneur, we leave everything to your wisdom, and only want what you wish.' The brief sent to the Archbishop of Tours we heard of only through '*L'Ami de la Religion.*' We cannot understand him sending it to a newspaper. It is producing a great effect upon the clergy of Angers, Poitiers, and Nancy. Oh no! we never were rebellious religious, but souls oppressed, persecuted; happy in being like Him who, for love of us, became despised of men. Let us pray for those who made us rich by taking away from us everything. No, my dearest daughter, we shall not refuse any foundation: the source is miraculous; it will never dry up. The Jesuit fathers write to say that the house at Amiens is going to be founded. We answered *yes* to Belgium. We expect Father Gloriot on Saturday: he is burning with zeal for the work; and Father Barthès tells us we shall go to Albi in Provence, and then to America. Subjects are arriving; God is doing His work. Do your part, my very dear daughters, in helping His love. Try to get postulants.

"When you have means, my dear daughter, do have the repairs done, but before all things have good penitents; I give you every permission. Your letters do give me so much pleasure—tell us everything. Our sick are well and love you, and so do

all our sisters. Mary of St. Rosalie is infirmarian; Mary of the Annunciation, *lingère;* Mary of St. Michael, first mistress of penitents at Saumur: she left us this morning. Oh, how precious to me are Mary of St. Benedict's sentiments with regard to obedience. Well, my daughter, by the same obedience stay at Nancy. We shall also send a sister to Metz. And you, my beloved Mary of St. Margaret, with your sheep and your breviary—how like you—give us thirty penitents. As for Mary of the Cross, she has the kitchen: it ought to be put into our annals. Courage, my dear daughters! You are my heart's life by your dispositions: increase and fill the holy ark. We wait for news of you, just as the fathers of the Company of Jesus waited for news of their missionaries. Adieu once more, my children. We love and cordially cherish you in the love of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.—Your much attached, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA.

"*P.S.*—Yes, my daughter, do revive the union among the foundations. Let them know of the marvels at Nancy."

With attentive eye, Mother Pelletier, from her monastery at Angers, watched all the first steps of this, the youngest of her convents. Winter increased the difficulties of installation. The beginning was sanctified by the unfailing Cross, and the Mother cried "Courage," in accents of confidence, which made her daughters strong.

On the 17th December 1835, she wrote:—

"My Beloved Daughter,—I fear, from the anxiety expressed in your letter, this morning received, that our letters must have been lost, for my poor heart has often spoken to my children at Nancy. Your hearts are in the wine-press of privation. I see your troubles, and have known them too, and I pray our Lord to give you light and grace. You are deprived of all holy consolations, my very dear daughter; oh! courage. I see in God that these crosses are the very roots of the work which shall flourish at Nancy. Yes, it will be a great work: yet a little while, my beloved daughter, and you shall see great things. Once the worst of the cold is over, the Mother House will send you help in both choir and lay sisters. I have the sweet confidence that God will do everything, through Mary, our Mother. Oh, my dear daughter, we shall indeed most gladly receive your *first-born*. The dear postulant is received upon the conditions you made, which are good. Try and send her to us. It will be a joy to all the Chapter, which loves you tenderly, and beseeches you to continue your sweet cordiality, for it rejoices Sion. The Paris postulant is just what you thought: very good, happy, quite contented. Oh, please tell the Bishop Coadjutor that, if she perseveres, she shall have his name, and be sent to him after her profession. No, I shall refuse nothing to him—talk everything over with him: he is very prudent. Write to him for New Year's Day. Ah! how happy for

him that he is devoted to us. Courage, my three Xaviers! Be true apostles, humble of heart, interior, pious, zealous; make the work triumph. Our sisters are writing to you, and will tell you of the graces God has poured out upon us. The Benediction, the Bishop Coadjutor's sermon, the collection, and the help given all make us humble ourselves before God. How many graces!"

Four years after the foundation was made, the Nancy convent had a community of Magdalens and a preservation class. Mme. la Comtesse de la Granville (of Lille) gave 20,000 francs for the foundation of these classes.

The friends of the house were an honour to it. The Rev. Father Jandel, afterwards General of the Dominicans, knew and loved the Community. When he went to Nancy with Father Lacordaire to found a house, he went to pray in the sanctuary of the Good Shepherd, where he had celebrated the Holy Sacrifice. At different times he gave the religious retreats. The Rev. Father Hyacinthe Besson, the Dominican artist, was also much attached to the Good Shepherd.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CONSECRATED PENITENTS—M^ME. DE COUËSPEL, 1835–1836.

Mgr. Flaget—His visit to the Good Shepherd—The work of the consecrated Penitents—Class for young prisoners—Relations of Mme. Pelletier with other religious orders — Mme. de Lignac—Entrance of Mme. de Couëspel.

THE Good Shepherd was now beginning to attract the notice of all the great servants of God who cared for the extension of the glory and good of the Church. Early in December 1835, Mgr. Flaget, the Bishop of the American diocese of Bardstown, was the guest of Mgr. Montault, who not only brought him to visit the Good Shepherd, but arranged that the Community should be honoured by his presiding over a clothing ceremony.

He came to Angers, preceded by a reputation for eminent sanctity. The numerous miracles he had performed at Nantes, and especially the cures of Sister Louisa of Jesus, and Mlle. Olympie de Monti, through his prayers, had been much talked of.

He came to the Good Shepherd on the 12th December 1835. The *Benedictus* was sung on his arrival, and everything done to make his reception as

solemn as possible. He gave the habit to eleven postulants.

His heart, that of an Apostle, was won at once by the end of the Institute and its organisation, and he formed the idea of introducing it into America. Two years later, a young girl, Rosalie Auger, came from the Château-Gonthier, to enter the Good Shepherd. Mgr. Flaget had cured her from blindness; he had given her his blessing, then touched her eyelids, saying, "God will cure you, because He wants you to be a religious."

Nothing but a sketch of the holy prelate's life can give an idea of his attraction to the Good Shepherd. He had afterwards a large share in the extension of the work, not only during his stay in Rome and Angers, but also in America.

It would be difficult to imagine a more ideal type of a missionary bishop than Mgr. Flaget offers; his way is strewn with miracles, while he is always astonished that God should choose him as the instrument of His great works. He was born among the mountains of Auvergne, and brought up by an aunt, a poor peasant, under whose care his heart, endowed with exceptional Christian susceptibilities, was formed. He was educated at the seminary of Clermont, and, attracted by the sacerdotal virtues of the Sulpicians, entered their society. In 1792 he asked, and obtained leave from his superior, M. Émery, to devote himself to American missions. With two colleagues he travelled to Baltimore, and was sent thence, by Mgr.

Carroll, first bishop of the diocese, to the mission-station at Vincennes, in Indiana. The journey of 300 leagues was through vast deserts, peopled only by savage tribes. He was accompanied for a certain distance by another father, who was travelling to Ohio; and, when the time came for them to part, they knelt down at the foot of an oak tree, heard each other's confession, then rose and set out on their respective routes. At Vincennes, there were some thousands of Europeans, and Mgr. Flaget was well received. He taught and evangelised the white men, instructing them, not only in spiritual things, but in farming and mechanical arts, and converted savages whom he came across. There was no brother-priest within 80 leagues' distance, but the good father's devotion was supported by the Blessed Sacrament, and this thought: "What would M. Emery say if I failed in my duty as a missionary?"

He was recalled to Baltimore, and appointed to an educational post, his love of silence and spirit of penance attracting him all the while to La Trappe. But he was named Bishop of Bardstown, to his great confusion. To escape the appointment, he went to France, but was followed by the Pope's commands, and was obliged to accept the chief care of a diocese twice or thrice as large as the whole of that country. Once consecrated, the zeal of his apostolic heart redoubled, and every day of his life was marked by traits of self-sacrifice. He was always travelling. Even when he had reached the age of eighty he rode constantly on

horseback, evangelising his diocese. Sometimes he would travel thirty leagues to visit a sick person. His food was of the most frugal kind: he drank only water, except quite at the close of life, when he took a little wine. "I spent the first five years of my episcopate in the visitation of my diocese," he said, "and I dare say I never passed four days under the same roof." His zeal, his love of souls were contagious, and his diocese became fruitful in ecclesiastical vocations. His humility was never disturbed by the great graces vouchsafed to him. In 1825 he wrote, "Strangers hear of our successes and think them wonderful. But we who see them with our own eyes, and know what the disproportion is between our local resources and our need, speak of them like men in a dream, who follow the Divine impulse rather than the weak light of reason."

It will readily be understood that no one could be better fitted than such a missionary-apostle to comprehend the beauty of the work of the Good Shepherd, and enter into the views of the Foundress. She had his own burning zeal for the conversion of sinners, his indefatigable intrepidity in entering upon works for the glory of God, and, like him, was divinely honoured by sensible tokens of God's approval in the rapid success of her foundations, which seemed to be the creations of Heaven rather than of man.

From their very first interview, a holy friendship was established between these two servants of God. Mgr. Flaget became the defender, the apologist of the

Good Shepherd. At Rome, he stood up for the Mother General against her detractors, spoke to the Pope himself of the valuable work of the Institute, made the first advances to the Cardinal Vicar for a foundation in the Holy City; and in later years, it was Bishop Flaget who first introduced religious of the Order in America.

The approbation of the saints is God's approbation incorporated in human speech. The encouragements, the blessings of the holy Bishop were, from that first interview, a source of great confidence for the future of her work to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. In those early days of the foundations, she had heavy labours. Not even by dint of the most rigid economy could she meet all the expenses of the house: it was through recourse to the Blessed Virgin that the debts of the Community were paid. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was utterly unworldly: she would receive postulants, without any consideration as to dowry. Most of her children were poor. She gave freely to all the foundations, and when alms came from benefactors, they were employed either in the purchase of ground or construction of new buildings. The Convent rejoiced in its holy poverty, and regarded it as a friend. We find one of the professed sisters, Sister Mary of the Angels, telling her brother, the Superior of the College at Combrée, that to save postage, she has not written to him, and, like a faithful daughter of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, she makes merry over her religious poverty, and thinks of St. Francis of Assisi.

A religious who was one of the novices clothed by Mgr. Flaget, writing of those days, says, "In the refectory we had often nothing but cabbage moistened with a little vinegar; in the morning, only wretched soup. In the Novitiate there was never any fire, and we used to go out into the snow and stamp our feet to warm ourselves."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's perfect trust in God sustained her daughters. Mme. d'Andigné, whom this trust in God always touched, used laughingly to call her "the lady of hope," but at the same time she followed M. de Neuville's example, and made herself the auxiliary of God's Providence. She directed the work of the gardens, and had them planted with the best kind of fruit-trees, and had vegetables put in at the proper seasons. She provided clothing for twenty of the little girls of St. Michael; but, more valuable than all else, she was an ever-ready helper and adviser in difficult moments. Through her ingenuity the way out of difficulties was always suggested. She was a person possessed of great authority, which, together with an extensive connection, stood the Community in good stead, attracting to it subjects of various kinds, and annihilating the calumny of its enemies. To her, in great measure, the Congregation owed Mgr. Montault's unvarying affection. She used regularly to follow the choir-exercises of the religious: her example edified them, and was a great help to the Mother, who used often to quote her as a model of self-sacrifice and industry.

The year 1835 was fruitful in works at the Good Shepherd. The classes seemed to overflow with the life of grace. Every one seemed to make the Superioress their model, whose ardent soul was always tending to some higher good. Some among the penitents who felt no vocation to be professed as Magdalens, and yet shrank from returning to the world with its dangerous paths, opened their hearts to their directress, and told her they wanted to stay at the Good Shepherd always, and to devote themselves to doing good in the class, where they themselves had recovered the peace of God. The directress, Sister Mary of St. Vincent of Paul Cornet, told this to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who received the news with joy and gratitude to God, regarding it as inspired by His Divine Providence. She quickly grasped the useful service that these consecrated penitents might render to the others—by example, advice, and constant watchfulness they might become their guardian angels, and be active auxiliaries in the class to the religious. She chose a black dress for them, to distinguish them from the other penitents, and they made their act of consecration in her presence. A short time afterwards a retreat was given them by Jesuit fathers, during which there was an outburst of extraordinary fervour. Some asked leave to wear hair shirts, iron chains, and to fast on bread and water. Some put nettles and thorns into their beds; some exchanged their pillow for a stone. The Mother, however, being prudent, put a stop to these inordinate demonstrations of zeal, and made them

see that there is no penance so agreeable to God as the mortification of self-love through obedience.

She composed them a rule which was approved by Mgr. Montault, in 1839, and by Cardinal Patrigi, in 1845. It shows the wise spirit of a person of great experience, of a religious far advanced in the spiritual life. Before admission to the preparatory probation, the penitent must, for not less than two years, have shown marks of true conversion, of humility, of perfect obedience, and of exemplary charity towards her companions. When her confessor advises it, she then makes her request to the Superioress, and, if the sisters of the Council agree, is admitted to probation. She now receives at the grille the distinctive garb, a semi-religious costume, which a priest has blessed. The probation lasts two years, after which time such aspirants as are judged worthy, solemnly make their act of consecration before a priest, and promise not to leave the convent for one year. On the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, this consecration and vow are annually renewed.

These consecrated penitents follow the same rule as the other penitents, but, in addition, recite the Office of Our Lady of Dolours. Their chief duty being to set a good example, their exterior should bear the signs of the virtues which adorn their souls: they should be pious without acrimony, humble without cringing, mortified without harshness. In a word, their exterior should, so far as possible, represent to those about them the loveliness of a life wholly given

to God, and governed in all things by an earnest desire to please Him.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's idea, that these converted penitents should be auxiliaries of her apostolate among the other penitents, that they should be living images of the effects of Divine grace in the sight of those among their companions who had either not yet altogether responded to God's grace, or who still resisted it, was admirably adapted to produce the best results. If the constant sight of evil tends to produce corruption, how much more should the continual presence of virtue, in those by no means our superiors, tend to make us better? It is a perpetual exhortation. Philosophical moralists of the greatest renown have sometimes represented virtue as placed on an inaccessible rock, pleasing to the sight and imagination, but unattainable to the common weakness of mankind. But Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's knowledge went deeper, and was far truer than that of such philosophers. She knew the human heart, and showed it in thus turning every aid to account in her work of conversion, and in all the means she employed. In forms, attractive and easy to imitate, she showed it in her dealing with every individual penitent. Full of earnest zeal, she drew up a touching formulary of particular wishes for the consecrated. The whole congregation was supposed to address each consecrated in the following words: "Penitent souls, who live in solitude and forgetfulness of the world, happy sheep, whom the Good Shepherd carefully sought and found,

and who have faithfully responded to His voice, may you never forsake the safe and quiet path which it has pleased the Divine mercy to cause you to enter. Continue to walk along the road which leads to that heavenly country, which is the object of your hopes, by the constant practice of the rule offered to you. This is the end of all our desires. That you should persevere is the greatest consolation you can give us as the fruit of our ministry. You will be the glory of our congregation by your virtues, and, after having here below enjoyed the calm and sweetness to be found in the exercise of humility, obedience, and charity, you will depart, to receive from the hands of a Father, infinitely good, infinitely generous, an eternal kingdom granted to the penitent as well as to the innocent."

The classes had already increased in number in 1834, the older penitents and younger having been separated, and the latter placed under the patronage of St. Michael. This arrangement caused a still further increase in their numbers.

We have already mentioned that the Prefect of the Maine and Loire had visited the Good Shepheed, and that, having been greatly struck by the perfect system of organisation, he had proposed to the Superioress to intrust to her care young girls under fifteen who had been in prison. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, always ready to do anything for the good of souls, had accepted the task, and in a short time received several young prisoners. Some of the poor girls were

so happy in the house of God that, when the time came for their discharge, they asked not to be sent away. This was, indeed, consoling to the Mother, that her untiring zeal should, under God, have been the means of the conversion of these young girls; that having come to her, rebellious to God and the laws of society, they should now be progressing in virtue. The beauty of a converted soul, a soul that has turned away from evil to good, is a spectacle in which the servants of God delight. It also comforted her and the other religious greatly, to know that they were giving shelter, in an atmosphere of vivifying piety, to young girls who would otherwise be left neglected in the unwholesome, corrupting atmosphere of state prisons. These poor children, disowned by society, found mothers in the religious of the Good Shepherd.

In the midst of all her other work, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia always religiously cultivated cordial relations with other communities, regarding all as members of the same family. When an order new in Angers, Jesuits, Oblates, Visitation nuns arrived there, she was always ready with attentions and assistance. She used also to correspond with various communities, and in return received many affectionate letters. The following is from Mme. de Lignac, of the Ursulines at Tours, her former teacher:—

"*December 29th*, 1835.

"My very worthy and very dear Mother,—We heartily rejoice in all your successes; we share all your

tribulations; in a word, we regard ourselves as identified with the Society of the Good Shepherd. May God grant that we may all some day meet in the one, the only safe fold! Remember us to all your flock, for which we desire every blessing that makes saints, and great saints. Believe in the most true attachment of your old Mother and most devoted friend,

"SISTER DE LIGNAC,
Ursulines' Superioress."

On the 17th of January 1836, she again wrote:—

"It is, indeed, from the bottom of my heart that I rejoice with you, our very dear and very worthy Mother, for all that the Lord has done. Oh, my God, how admirable are Thy ways, and how marvellous the guidance of Thy Providence. Yes, yes; we shall indeed help you to thank Him, and shall continually beg Him to shed on you and your work the abundance of His graces. Your work is truly ours also, our interest in it is so great. All my daughters join in asking for our union in prayer and work, and you may be assured that you and yours can never have more faithful, more constant friends than,

"DAUGHTERS OF ST. URSULA."

A few days after receiving this letter, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia experienced one of the greatest consolations she ever had. The charge of personal ambition in her undertakings brought against her other accusations, and especially, the opposition of the

Archbishop of Tours, Mgr. de Montblanc, had been a source of deep pain to her. But at the end of January 1836, Mgr. Montault came to the Good Shepherd to announce that Mgr. de Montblanc had come to Tours, expressly to make his peace with his suffragan, and say that he had been mistaken about the Generalat and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and that he had returned to his diocese full of esteem for both.

M. Vaures, Penitentiary at St. Peter's, who, as will be remembered, had made himself defender of the Good Shepherd, being informed of the Archbishop's change of mind, spoke of it to the Pope. Gregory XVI., in reply, said, "Let us thank God. We are delighted to hear it. There cannot be any doubt about the good Archbishop having been mistaken, and we always hoped he would see things in a truer light. Should you be writing to the worthy Bishop of Angers, tell him how glad we are to hear this news. We send him our blessing. God's blessing will continue to rest on the religious of the Good Shepherd of Angers."

In proportion to the protracted grief caused her by the Archbishop's persistent opposition was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's relief in its withdrawal. Bodily pain is but a small evil in comparison to the acute mental suffering which those only whom we respect and desire to love have power to inflict. The Mother's mind was now free to occupy itself wholly with the end for which the Institute was established; it was no longer tortured by the reproaches of one who had formerly stood to her in the relation of a

Superior; and, while thanking God with redoubled fervour for the extension of the Institute, she showed a more than ever holy intrepidity in advancing it.

The words of Gregory XVI., "God's blessing will continue to rest on the religious of the Good Shepherd of Angers," were daily realised before the astonished gaze of the Mother Foundress Vocations were now numerous and solid. That of Mme. de Couëspel, one of the benefactresses of the monastery, was among the greatest of the Divine favours vouchsafed at this time. This lady was the child of M. Paulmier, a former Mayor of Angers, and had been educated by a religious, a Daughter of Calvary, who lay hidden in M. Paulmier's family during the Revolution. She had married M. Claude Eléonore de Couëspel, Captain-Commandant of the 44th line regiment, Chevalier of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis, and of the Royal Order of the Legion of Honour.

For eight years she followed her husband's wandering career from garrison to garrison. At her father's death, it was found his will favoured another daughter, a circumstance which so irritated M. de Couëspel that he challenged his brother-in-law to fight a duel, which was only stopped by Mme. de Couëspel rushing bravely in between the swords of the combatants. On retiring from the army, M. de Couëspel settled with his wife at Angers, where she nursed him through a long illness, dividing her life between care of her husband and ever increasing exercises of piety.

Her *hotel* was not far from the monastery, and,

having entered into relations with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, she was quickly won by the merits and attractiveness of the courageous Foundress. She used to visit her, and her purse was often opened to help her in her works of charity. The Mother returned this devotion with very sincere affection, and encouraged her in various spiritual practices, pious reading, patience, and submission to the will of God, and gradually, while still in the world, formed her to the religious life. After M. de Couëspel's death, who, thanks to the pious care of his wife, died in sentiments of most consoling piety, Mme. de Couëspel came to the Good Shepherd as a postulant. Her intellectual culture, her straightforward character, her firm will, her energy for good, the rich gifts with which her soul was endowed, had from the first been fully appreciated by the Mother General, who hailed her vocation with delight, as the realisation of one of her most earnest prayers. That so great a soul might enter the community, she had offered the following vow: "On the first Friday of this year, 1836, in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia Pelletier, Superioress General, vow, in presence of our sisters of the Chapter, to say every day for a year the *Stabat*, the *Sub Tuum*, and three times the Invocation to St. Joseph, if the Blessed Virgin should obtain for us the entrance into our Congregation of Mme. de Couëspel."

It was after a lengthened conference with Mgr. Flaget, whom she had already seen during her hus-

band's illness, that Mme. de Couëspel came to the Good Shepherd; and on the 10th March 1836 she received the religious habit from his hands. She took the name of Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus, which had been designedly chosen for her by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. Owing to Mgr. Flaget's reputation for sanctity, and the elevated worldly station of the postulant, the ceremony of clothing was peculiarly solemn. One of the religious, who was learning Italian in view of a foundation in Italy, described it in that language, by way of an exercise, to her brother, Superior of a College in Anjou. Mme. de Couëspel has herself given an account of her impressions when she came to the Good Shepherd after her husband's death: "When the enclosure-door closed upon me, I cannot express the feeling that came over me. My heart sought nothing but God, needed nothing but God, desired nothing but God. Something told me I should find Him in the place I was in, and by degrees my poor heart grew calm. The thought that this haven which had been opened to me was a world between heaven and earth bound me to it, and I promised God interiorly that I would never leave it, and begged Him to grant me the grace to be received there.

"At the end of three weeks I returned home, to set my affairs in order. When I re-entered that house, all the old anguish, which had only left me at the Community door, rushed in upon me again, nor did I recover peace until once more in that holy

dwelling. Before I went back to it, I wanted to consult Mgr. Flaget about what I was passing through interiorly, for the remembrance of the blessing he had once given me and its results had inspired me with boundless confidence in the saintly prelate. I went to the Bishop's house and opened my heart to him. At the close of an hour's conversation, my fears were still not altogether overcome. Within me a strong voice seemed to call me to the religious life; but, on the other hand, I felt so utterly unworthy of forming part of such a holy company, it seemed so presumptuous in me to think of becoming the spouse of the King of Glory, like one of those virgins of spotless purity. Oh, my God! I was humbled, crushed, overcome; I could not think; I could not decide. At last I told the Bishop, who answered, quite simply, that it was God's will that I should be a religious. I rose and threw myself at his feet, saying to him, 'My good father, then may God's Will be done. Give me your blessing.' He stood up and blessed me, saying, 'May God, my child, bless you and be glorified in you.' After those words all my indecision vanished, and I asked at once to be received into the Novitiate of the Good Shepherd."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia regarded the entrance of Mme. de Couëspel as one of God's greatest benefits to the Order. She affectionately watched her formation in the virtues of the religious state, and admired her spirit of detachment, her child-like submission, and her humility. As soon as she was clothed, she

was made *économe* of the house. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's admiration for her was life-long, and, only a year before her own death, in one of her familiar discourses to the Community, she thus spoke of her:—

"What shall we say of Mme. de Couëspel, my dear daughters? She sold her mansion and her property to give money to the Community, and reduced herself to such destitution that, having gone to found one of her monasteries, she was obliged to hire mattresses. Did she complain? Oh, no; and our good Mother Assistant, Sister Mary of St. Chantal of Jesus de Laroche, of whom I cannot speak without tears, she, also, was a great benefactress to us. She practised holy poverty so faithfully that, when her farmers or other tenants brought her their rent, she would not even have returned them the customary five francs without special permission from the Superioress. When she died, nothing was found in her cell but her crucifix, pin-cushion, and scissors. She was always working, even when she received visits from her family in the parlour."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had a deep reverence for those men of God whose virtues recalled those of their Divine Master. Mgr. Flaget had shown such kindly feeling towards the Good Shepherd that she took courage to ask him to go with Mgr. Montault to St. Florent de Saumur to establish the enclosure. The two holy prelates went on the 25th April 1836, and the Mother, together with Mme. D'Andigné

and Sister Teresa of Jesus, the new *économe*, Mgr. Flaget's spiritual daughter, also went. Her soul was filled with rapturous joy in God that she should see prayer once more offered in the old Benedictine Abbey and hear the multitudes gathered round the two prelates for the occasion, break out into praises and admiration because a country so poor in faith was once more to be blessed with a religious order. Henceforward the Mother always thought of Mgr. Flaget as a tender image of his Divine Lord; and this remembrance of him made her very confident for all works he had blessed and encouraged at the outset.

There was no rest for the Mother in the midst of all these rapid successes. One foundation always led to another. The interest in the Order shown by the Pope and Cardinals, their eulogiums, the hopes placed in it by eminent servants of God, such as Cardinal Odescalchi, Father Kohlmann, and Mgr. Flaget, had greatly moved the Jesuit fathers, and, wherever they saw any probability of success, they worked for its extension.

Father Barthès, formerly rector of the Jesuits' house at Blamont, induced his superiors to offer the building there to the Good Shepherd when the Jesuits had to leave it. The offer was made through Fathers Barthès and Gloriot, who came to Angers in January 1836, and was thankfully accepted by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia for a new foundation.

Father Barthès wrote to Father Fouillot, his superior

at St. Acheul: "It was at Angers, in the very monastery of the Good Shepherd, an establishment which I do not hesitate to rank among the signal manifestations of God's omnipotence and mercy, especially since I have seen the documents signed in the Sovereign Pontiff's own hand, whereby he deigns to defend it against the attacks of hell. It was also just at the time when, either from altar or pulpit, I was distributing the Bread of Life to the mother and her daughters. It was when I, with them had just recommended the establishment and everything that may ever proceed from it, to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary. It was just when I felt a stronger necessity than ever before to take part in a work of such excellence that our good Father Superior wrote to me in the following terms:—

"I think I shall please you by sending you the enclosed letter from Amiens (yours, dear Father). You will arrange this important business personally with the excellent Superioress."

Father Barthès was so delighted at these proofs of Divine furtherance of the work that his letter becomes an enthusiastic panegyric. He says: "The Society of Jesus will always hold itself bound to assist to the utmost the advancement of the Good Shepherd. He wished to show the Bishop of Amiens these truly miraculous proofs of the protection vouchsafed by Divine Providence to dioceses who ask for foundations of the Good Shepherd. Belgium and Rome also desire them. Dear kind Father Fouillot, make haste, I beg

of you, that soon we may see the former home of little lambs (the former pupils of St. Acheul) filled with sheep that were lost. I hear that good Father Gloriot has come. He is full of ardent zeal for the congregation. God must have sent him here on purpose to help me."

CHAPTER XV

FOUNDATIONS IN THE NORTH OF FRANCE

1836

Foundation at Amiens—Kindness of Father Barthès—Kindness from the religious of the Sacred Heart—From the Jesuits—Mother Pelletier's promise to the Blessed Virgin—Her gratitude—Foundation at Lille—M. Wicart.—Mgr. Belmas—Sister Mary of the Angels—Mlle. Legrand—Mlle. Santerre.

In the month of January 1836, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent Sisters Mary of St. Chantal of Jesus and Mary of St. Henry Pétrop to Amiens to inspect Blamont. On their arrival, the religious went first to call on the Bishop, Mgr. de Chabons (formerly senior chaplain to the Duchess of Berry) and received his blessing. They then went to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, where they were cordially entertained for seventeen days, and meantime, under the guidance of the Jesuit Fathers, minutely inspected Blamont and its surroundings.

When they got back to Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was suffering from erysipelas, but, although it was eleven o'clock at night when they arrived, she was so interested to hear about the new foundation that she sent for them to come at once to her, instead of waiting till morning. Surely that midnight scene—the two religious, but just returned from

travel, seated by the bed of the sick Mother, in her poor little cell near the Magdalens, the conversation of the possibilities of saving the most abandoned souls in Picardy—was fit for angels to gaze upon. Only hearts given unreservedly to God are thus always day and night on watch to save souls.

In less than a fortnight, two religious were despatched to begin the foundation: Sister Mary of St. Henry Pétrop, Superioress; Sister Mary of St. Bartholomew Gonin, Mistress of Penitents. They took with them only 350 francs, but were again charitably entertained by the religious of the Sacred Heart, and stayed there a week. The religious of the Holy Family and their Superioress, Mother St. Felix, also showed them much delicate kindness.

When they first went to Blamont, they took up their quarters in the parlours only. Gradually, however, as alms came in, they were able to buy furniture; and when Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had sent more sisters to the foundation, the ceremony of enclosure was celebrated. This installation took place on the 25th of April. It was presided over by Mgr. de Chabons, and, thanks to the fathers of St. Acheul, was unusually solemn. The preacher was Father de Ravignan, who rendered them the further service of dissipating the prejudices entertained against them by the Prefect of Amiens, with whom he was on terms of friendship.

The fathers of St. Acheul continued to bestow the most devoted religious care on the foundation. One

of them came every day, for the first few months, to say Mass, bringing with him the wine for it and a choir boy to serve. Even the lay brothers, and especially Brother Firmin, showed great devotedness. The Lazarist Fathers, who directed the great seminary at Amiens, also rendered many useful services to the sisters.

But no one was more zealous on behalf of the Good Shepherd than Father Fouillot, S.J. He started a subscription for it, and, to appeal to that large class of persons who understand what may be called the language of the eyes better than that of the lips, and to bring home to them the beautiful reality of what is accomplished in the supernatural order at the Good Shepherd, he devised an image which could scarcely have failed to be rightly interpreted by those who saw it. It was in the form of a triptych, and was painted by Mother St. Jerome of the Convent des Oiseaux, in Paris. In the centre panel the Good Shepherd was represented, surrounded by sheep, whom He was confiding to a shepherdess; in the right-hand panel she was dressing the wounds of a sheep that had been hurt, and beneath it was the inscription, "Repentance." In the left-hand panel, the sheep was flying from a wolf, which, in the act of springing upon it, was struck down by a ray of light from heaven; the inscription beneath, "Innocence exposed to danger."

Through the generosity of Mgr. Mioland (who had succeeded Mgr. Chabons), the Jesuit fathers put the finishing stroke to their kindnesses by arranging easy

terms for the sale of the house to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia.

Directly she had signed the deed of purchase, she wrote announcing it to her daughters at Amiens, for whom her heart was full of affection. She pictured to herself the characteristic impulse of each on receiving the news, knowing them all so well. One would cry for joy, another rush to the chapel, a third promise acts of mortification in thanksgiving. "I think I see you, good Sister Mary of St. Dosithée: you will run to Our Lady's feet. You, dear little Sister Mary of St. Henry, will be wiping away your tears; and you, my poor Sister Mary of St. Timothy, I see you too, who have prayed so hard; and you too, Sister Mary of St. Ignatius, who have made so many sacrifices."

She always enlisted Heaven in her interests; and as she, with her daughters, had promised to have an altar to Our Lady of Dolours at Blamont, she urged the religious there to fulfil the vow as soon as possible, "since our heavenly Mother has given everything," she wrote. When this debt of gratitude was paid, she was anxious that the instalments due to the Jesuit fathers on the house should also be paid punctually. For the Jesuits, her helpers in all her works at Blamont and everywhere else, she was always contriving some new form of delicate attention. When they came first to establish themselves at Angers, she sent them wine and church linen, and heaped small services upon them. Three times a week Bijou (the horse belonging to the Good Shepherd) was sent to their house laden with

fruit, vegetables, and other provisions. Father Levé, when he visited the convent of Poitiers in 1855, reminded the sisters of the poverty of the Jesuits when they first came to Angers; "But," said he, "the Rev. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia provided all necessaries, and ready cooked too."

Blamont soon became a source of consolation to the Mother. Penitents arrived in large numbers as soon as the house was opened. All the other religious orders in Picardy showed warm interest in the work.

Father Barthès, it will be remembered, had given retreats to the Community, and had thus had peculiar opportunities of appreciating the beauty of the work and the zeal of the Foundress. It was his belief that God intended to use the Good Shepherd as the instrument of great benefits to individual souls and the whole Church, and he employed a fertile ingenuity in introducing colonies of the religious into the various dioceses. By corresponding with M. Chavet at Dufrenne de Lille, he paved the way for a foundation there.

There was already a house of the Refuge there in the parish of St. Catherine, conducted by two good maiden ladies, who had begun to feel that neither themselves nor their fortune were equal to the burden of such an important work. The priest of the parish, M. Wicart (afterwards Bishop of Fréjus and Laval), wished to see it handed over to religious.

Through Father Barthès' agency, the Jesuit Superior

in Paris, Father Varin, became interested in it as a possible foundation for the Good Shepherd, and enlisted the interest of Mlle. de Lariandrie, a noble soul.

M. Wicart entered into correspondence upon the subject with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, promising his support, pledging himself that the people of Lille, whose generosity towards Catholic works is unparalleled, should aid and support the work. The Mother intended visiting Amiens, and promised afterwards to go on to Lille, to consider upon the spot the best arrangements to make for the foundation.

On the 17th of August, she started on her journey, accompanied by Sister Teresa of Jesus (Sister-*Économe*), the Abbé Mainguy, and three religious, who were to be left at Amiens. She wrote, a few days later, to Mother St. John of the Cross: "Here I am in the superb convent at Amiens. The good and venerable Bishop showers kindnesses on us. The Jesuit fathers are also very good to us. To-morrow (24th August) we start for Lille. Pray, pray! It is the most difficult of all our missions. God only can do it. I am not capable of it, and go only because it is His Divine will."

She was received at Lille by M. Wicart, and introduced to Mlle. Legrand, the lady who had founded the Refuge, and to whom it belonged. She received Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia as a deliverer, and the Mother told her that, if the Refuge was in debt, that should not stand in the way of the transfer: she

counted on help from the people of Lille. But an obstacle, which M. Wicart thought greatest of all, and had not yet spoken of to her, remained to be overcome. The foundation could not be concluded without authorisation from Mgr. Belmas, Archbishop of Cambrai, who was said to dislike cloistered communities.

This impression prevented every one from asking him to authorise the introduction into Lille of religious of the Good Shepherd, all supposing the request would lead only to a direct refusal.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia herself, however, undertook the delicate mission, and putting her trust in God, started for Cambrai, accompanied by the two religious she had brought with her from Angers. She was the bearer of a letter from Mlle. Legrand, in which that lady asked the Archbishop's leave to hand over to the Good Shepherd the burden she was no longer able to bear. The reception at the Archbishop's house was cold and unpromising, and, while the Archbishop was reading the letter, his face flushed. Those few silent moments seemed hours to the Mother, who employed them in earnest prayer. The letter was handed back to her without a word; but after a moment's further silence, the Archbishop said, "I should like very much to have you in my diocese." The Mother began to thank him, but he stopped her, saying, "It is I who should thank you, for you will come here to help me to save souls God has entrusted to me. Not merely do I accept your proposal, but

I beg you to lose as little time as possible in entering the house you are going to inhabit."

After this he took the three religious to visit some rooms in the house and a collection of remarkable pictures. The Mother then took leave of him, joy in her heart, and in honour of the Blessed Virgin, recited acts of thanksgiving for the happy issue of the dreaded interview.

She wrote to M. Wicart and Mlle. Legrand, to tell them of the entire success of her mission, and promised that sisters should be sent from Angers on her return.

She visited Amiens again on the way back, and was received by her daughters with filial affection. She went with the Superioress (Sister Mary of St. Henry) to St. Acheul, to call on Father Fouillot. He was in church when they arrived, and thither they followed him. As they were leaving, Brother Firmin (who had taken such warm interest in Blamont) approached Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and told her she must not leave without visiting the Altar of Our Lady of Seven Dolours, his particular devotion, pointing to the altar as he spoke. Her appearance of great piety, habitual to her when praying, so struck the good brother, while she was kneeling at the altar he loved, that he presented her with a rosary of the Seven Dolours of Our Lady.

The return journey, so far as Paris, was made with Father Fouillot, who had just been ordered to Avignon, and his company was a great pleasure to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia.

From Paris she wrote to Mother St. John of the Cross :—

"PARIS, *September 2nd*, 1836.

"'Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God.'

"We have just returned, my dear daughters, from our great mission, and it is very sweet to me to speak to you about it. Your house already is, in God, my great joy. You, my dear Sister Mary St. John of the Cross, did me so much good by writing to me at Lille —Sister Mary of St. Augustine also. Accompanied by prayers, good wishes, and cordiality, we embarked upon the great and new mission which the Lord, in His love and mercy, had reserved for the dear Generalat. From Lille we had to travel to Cambrai, to see Mgr. Belmas, who received us with such joy and kindness that I cannot describe it. In short, all was settled. I ascribe all graces to the protection of our Blessed Lady, for there were crosses and obstacles. But it was the will of God. The venerable Foundress handed over her establishment to us with admirable humility. There are forty-eight penitents—interesting, very gentle, and all well disposed. There are children besides in another establishment—total number, eighty. The house does not look much outside, but is beautiful. The chapel is only just completed. It is magnificent, and so is the penitents' tribune. There are three blocks of building : it stands in the centre of the town.

"We are on our way back to Angers, to choose who shall be sent out to this dear colony. Ah! my

daughters, pray to God to enlighten us. I cannot go to Sens: I have more to do than I can get through, and many anxieties regarding the sad position of our beloved Mary of St. Basil. We have just written to Mgr. de Sens that, although we have found no place for it, we will nevertheless take the foundation. Can you really believe, my dearest daughters, that another town is now asking for one? But we want mothers, subjects. You are to pray and to send us subjects; but, alas! at this moment we need formed religious! Adieu! adieu! we are just starting. Your attached, MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

M. Wicart heard with delight the good news of the success of Mother Pelletier's mission, and scarcely knew how to express his joy and gratitude to her. He urged on the foundation, promising the future foundresses, not merely his own affectionate devotion, but that of all Lille.

But God was about to try the Mother's heart. The sister she had destined to be Superioress of the new foundation, Sister Mary of St. Basil Joubert, a perfect religious, was attacked by a kind of cholera, and died suddenly, at the age of twenty-six. It was a loss to which the Mother was keenly susceptible. The sister, a chosen soul, had belonged to a family of rich merchants at Noyen, in the diocese of Le Mans. She had been brilliantly educated, but had despised all worldly advantages, overcome her parents' opposition, resisted the flattering advances of the Superiors of the

Refuge—all that she might give herself to the Good Shepherd, be near the Mother General, and be to her the most obedient, the best loved, among her daughters. She had greatly dreaded the honours of superiority, and it was a pious belief among the sisters that, upon learning the intentions formed in her regard, she had offered herself to God as a victim for the prosperity of the Institute. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia mourned for her as one of those upon whom she had most counted. She died during the Mother's absence, a circumstance which sorely increased the protracted sufferings of her last agony.

To replace one who had given such promise of ably filling the office, Sister Mary of the Angels Levoyer was chosen, a religious who, by education and many qualities of heart and mind, resembled Sister Mary of St. Basil. In appointing her, the Mother, with that happy gift which marked her piety, of saying the right word at the right time, borrowed the speech of St. Ignatius, when sending St. Francis Xavier to India instead of Bobadilla : "I nominated Sister Mary of St. Basil for Lille, but Heaven nominates you."

Sister Mary of the Angels Levoyer belonged to the diocese of Angers. Two of her brothers were priests, much respected. One of them, M. Louis Levoyer, was for thirty years Superior of the College at Combrée. She was a pattern of gentleness and natural amiability, heightened by angelic piety and charity. She was remarkably docile, and had begun to study Italian, in case the Mother might see fit to send her to the

Roman foundation. She is the religious of whom we have spoken as carrying on a correspondence with her brother in that language, by way of exercise.

There was a small school for boarders kept at the Good Shepherd, of which she had been made mistress, because of her intellectual culture, and which advanced in piety and learning under her rule. Some of her pupils became religious. She loved all her little flock. The manner in which she wrote of it to her brothers shows plainly that she was devoted to it; but at the very slightest sign from her superiors, she was ready to start on any mission. She tells her brother that once, she supposed only to test her obedience, having been told to hold herself in readiness for a foundation, she had gone at once and packed her things: she stood the test well.

When she was nominated for Lille, she had to leave without the happiness of seeing her brothers. "God, no doubt, wanted to make the sacrifice a little greater, and so you were not allowed to come. I am going to Lille on Monday, to make a new foundation, for which, alas! I shall be responsible. But it is God's nomination, and I lean on Him."

She had never gone outside the enclosure since she came to the Good Shepherd, and to leave it and assume the charge of a house was painful to her. On her journey, however, she could think of nothing but the souls to whom she was going to devote herself. From this one thought, nothing—not the rich plains of Normandy, not the beautiful cathedral of Amiens—could

distract either her mind or that of the five religious with her. Naturally of a very frank expansive disposition, she found it difficult to accustom herself to the more reserved manners of the North. But before very long she won their hearts, and succeeded in making them devoted to her work. The following persons became her zealous coadjutors: Mlle. Potteau, M. le Messe de Pas, M. Vandercruysse de Waziers, the Countess de la Granville, and, above all, M. Wicart, senior priest of St. Catherine, who had welcomed the sisters on their arrival, as sent by Providence.

No happier choice could Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia have made for the house at Lille than that of her whom she fondly called her "Angel." Mlle. Legrand, the pious Foundress of the Refuge, was allowed to live with the Community, and was one of the most humble, most pious members of it. She was seventy-one years of age, but, nevertheless, in the following June, asked to be received into the Congregation of the Good Shepherd, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia not only kindly consented, but also abridged her Novitiate, and allowed her to make it at Lille. She took the name of Sister Mary of St. Gabriel, and, as soon as she had pronounced her vows, Mother Mary St. Euphrasia made her assistant to Sister Mary of the Angels—a delicate act, which highly delighted the people of Lille, who loved and respected the good, charitable, old lady.

Her devotion and reverence for Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia were very tender and filial. She wrote

to her, "My heart finds peace and contentment at the Good Shepherd. I wish I were a little younger, that I might do more for the Congregation, especially when my ears tingle with the reports of all the work heaped on you. I pray God to preserve you for His glory (I cannot do anything else for you); but He knows how much I desire to be submissive, and how great my affection is for a mother whose daughter I am not worthy to be."

Sister Mary of the Angels brought with her to Lille the spirit of apostleship learned from the Mother General, the apostleship of sweetness. She was sent to pave the way for various other foundations in the course of time—to Mons, Loos, and London. The first English novices came with her to France. She had perfect confidence in the supernatural lights of the Mother Foundress, and this confidence was the mainstay of her zeal. It was in union with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia that she did her great work at Lille, organising and extending the house, and receiving penitents and children of the Preservation class by hundreds. The Mother was always her model. She wrote to her brother at the college at Combrée: "I have a perfect model of virtue in our very honoured Mother Superior, and yet she has so many crosses that I think the holier a person is the more they must suffer. My respect for her goes on increasing more and more. God has given me a great grace in sending me to be under her direction. She is a St. Teresa. She draws down God's blessing on her house."

Her relations with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia were very touching in their filial trustfulness. "Dearest Mother," she writes, "I must confess a great sin: it weighs upon my conscience, but I will never do such a thing again. There were workmen in the house doing something to one of the boarder's rooms, and we got them to begin making us two little parlours, hoping all the time for an answer from you. And to tell you the real truth, dear Mother, it *was* very inconvenient to receive every one in the community room. But I will never again do anything of the sort, for your 'Angel' wishes to depend solely on her dear Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, whom she loves with her whole heart. Your very humble, very submissive, very affectionate daughter, who begs you to bless her, together with all your little flock at Lille."

In all her letters there is the same affectionate admiration for her Superioress: she wants her advice, wants to propagate her spirit among the flock under her care. Everything that speaks to her of Angers and her Mother there pleases her. "Some one has just gone out of this house," she wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia; "and what pleases me about the gentleman is, that he has such an esteem for our Congregation, that to hear him talk was like hearing your charity. 'I have visited the penitents at Angers,' he said, 'and how different they are from those at Rome! If I had not been told they were penitents, I should have taken them for religious.' Then he spoke about our worthy Mother General, our

good father, M. de Neuville, our chaplains—all with the utmost esteem."

The care of all her daughters, of all the foundations, was borne by the Mother General. In heart and thought she lived in the midst of the religious at both Lille and Poitiers, and not with them only, for all her daughters, no matter how widely separated from her, felt that she was with them in spirit; felt that communication with her was unbroken; her aim, her spirit, were theirs; their hearts one with hers, in the one common longing for the conversion of souls—the glory of God.

As we have mentioned, Sister Mary of the Angels found two pious ladies in charge of the penitents at Lille. Both were zealous, and both she employed according to their respective dispositions and attractions of grace. While one entered the cloister, the other, Mlle. Santerre, kept her liberty; and although she lived in the convent, took no vows, wore a lay costume, and could go outside the enclosure. She was a woman of manly character, and had been sternly brought up —there was something almost soldier-like about her devotedness. She was very much liked in Lille, and used to visit the rich families to recommend the Good Shepherd to them. When she came across any penitent, she would bring her back to the convent with her. More than once she was seen holding some poor girl by the arm in the street, preaching to her, and finally inducing her to come with her to the convent. She cheered the whole community at recreation with

her gaiety, and sometimes amused the penitents by imitating the dances in vogue before the Revolution. Beneath all this exterior gaiety there was, however, hidden the tenderest charity. The sight of suffering always moved her to pity: she did not except even drunkards, and used to help and preach to them in the streets.

Her friend, Mlle. Legrand, was a person of very different character. Distinguished, equable in temper, reserved, she was like a religious before she put herself under the direction of Sister Mary of the Angels.

Only in religion could such a spectacle be found: the young religious, with scarcely any experience of life, coming to Lille with the delegated authority of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and accepting the task of directing an aged experienced woman, directress of an important institution. And Mlle. Legrand, in her religious habit, child-like, submissive, anticipating the commands of her Superioress, and by her respect, showing that she regarded her as holding the place of Him who guides the obedient soul to the highest good.

CHAPTER XVI

M. DE NEUVILLE—ROME AND LE PUY

1836–1837

M. de Neuville—Spiritual helps received by him from the servant of God—Mother Pelletier's letters—Her faith—Her love for Rome—Her gratitude—Her hospitality—Foundation at Puy—Trials—Sickness—House at Puy and its protectors—Mgr. de Bonald.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who, from Angers, spread lifegiving rays to multitudes of souls, often took counsel with good "Father" de Neuville, who, for his part, was continually showering charity on the Good Shepherd. The intentions at his command as motives for these gifts were innumerable: they were for Masses, the conversion of some difficult penitent, Our Lady of Fourvières, St. Philomena, or the Holy Angels.

The younger religious took pleasure in keeping him well up in the smallest details of Good Shepherd news, and, in order to do so, used to write notes on the two eggs the Mother daily sent him. Everything connected with the house interested him, and, gentle and patient as he was, he was nevertheless roused to anger when malicious reports spread against it reached his ears. "You have had those among you who

palmed themselves off on you for a short time, and then went off faster than they came: some frightened by the labour of washing, which was too hard for them; another, so delicately sensitive that, when she saw a sister pray with her arms stretched out in the form of a cross, she was frightened nearly out of her wits, and, calling out, 'She's crucified,' ran away, and may be running still for all I know. I do hope all this nonsense will die naturally."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia regarded him as the friend, the counsellor in all difficulties, sent by God. Scarcely a day passed in which he was not in some way or other occupied about his beloved monastery and the Mother's labours.

Everything he did, even the alms he bestowed on the poor in his own neighbourhood, converged in the great work for the conversion of sinners. Once he wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia: "Madam, a poor girl at Chalonnes, very pious, cousin of one of my women-servants, used to earn her living by spinning, but in these hard times that means simply beggary. I promised I would buy some thread from her, the finest she could spin, and pay whatever she got in better times, which would be eight francs. She has just brought me six lbs., which she thinks splendid, and says more is coming at the New Year. As I am always thinking of the wants of the Good Shepherd, it has occurred to me that it might be a good plan to give it to you. Kindly tell me truly if you really want it?"

On the 21st October 1836, he wrote to say that his man-servant had just bought seven cartloads of wood for the Good Shepherd, then adds: "I send you a red partridge; it is alive, but not tame, like St. John's, so beware. I wish for you and all your sisters that the Sun of peace and joy may shine on you."

On his side, M. de Neuville found in Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, with her strong soul and invincible bravery, a great and encouraging example. He loved to come to her in all his troubles and spiritual needs, to listen to her pious exhortations, and ask for the prayers of the Community. "How good of you to write to me," he said to her, on the 26th December 1836, "when so overwhelmed with work and trouble. But how much I am obliged to you for it! Your letter has really comforted me. I was out of spirits and felt tempted to murmur, but, when I thought of your strength of soul, it encouraged me, for you know well how to keep the upper hand over mere natural feeling."

It was not only their common interest in the great work of the Good Shepherd on which the connection between these two souls was grounded, but a resemblance in their devotional attractions and especially in their respective modes of honouring and praying to the Blessed Virgin.

On the 18th December 1836, M. de Neuville wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, "I spent most of last night in an armchair. It was too cold to star

gaze, and I took refuge in a little book on the love of our Blessed Lady, which I had not looked at for a long time. It did me more good than anything else could have done, and calmed my mind; for it says that every servant of Mary will be saved, and that the devil was forced to confess this to St. Dominic, by the mouth of one possessed. Is not this a great consolation for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, where the Mother of God is served so well?"

M. de Neuville, like Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, was fond of using Scriptural words and figures to express his devotional sentiments, a habit which brought his thoughts and tastes into the very spirit of the Foundress and her order: "I regard myself as in a desert where I am in want of three things—water, bread, shelter. May I, through your sisters' prayers, find the water that flows from the rock—tears of repentance; may I become ever more diligent in gathering at daybreak the manna that falls from above—the love of God; and lastly, in storm, cold, and heat may I ever take the shortest path to the cave of refuge, always open upon Calvary, the heart of Jesus. Thus shall I view death more calmly, and be eternally grateful to all who have prayed for me."

It was not only a temporal benefactor of her work that the Mother found in him, but a spiritual coadjutor, with a heart that vibrated to every supernatural joy, every trial at the Good Shepherd. It was a union between two chosen souls, prepared by Divine Providence, for the success of the Institute.

Both loved silence, retreat, and union with God: zest of any kind however, even that of religious silence, was difficult for Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, amongst the various occupations forced upon her in those years of foundations.

On the 16th November 1836, she wrote: "I hope to make my retreat, in spite of winds and tides. I do not know what God wills, but all sorts of work finds its way into my poor cell. I am still holding on firmly, praying, waiting, watching—but help us! I am overwhelmed. On the feast of St. Stanislaus, I was surprised by receiving a letter from one of the holiest bishops in France, Mgr. de Bonald, Bishop of Puy, in Velay. He asks us for a foundation, but in such a humble manner—so touchingly, so graciously, that one cannot refuse. On Tuesday another letter came from Monseigneur de Strasburg, asking me to send subjects at once. This morning our holy Constitutions have been delivered, approved, sent to the printer. Oh, favour beyond all favours! The dear letter from Rome fills up the measure of graces! The Bishop of Bardstown is working for the Roman foundation, which, it is thought, will be made next summer. Alas! I do not see subjects for it. The French foundations absorb all we have, and all alike are for the glory of God. Another piece of news for you. Mgr. de Forbin-Janson has written, with the utmost delicacy, to tell us that, in a short time, he will yield to our desires and come and pay us a visit. Oh, what strength God gives to this little crib of Bethlehem.

He makes it His tabernacle, the place of His mercy, the abode of His love."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's letters overflow with sentiments of gratitude. Whether writing of the numerous instances of God's mercy towards her work, or of the trials attending her and her daughters, she always ends with an elevation of the heart to God, thanking Him in joy and blessing Him in sorrow. Her faith in God's control over all events, even the smallest, gives her style a special character. One feels, when she is dilating on the marvels performed in her different houses, that to her all is simply God working in the Good Shepherd.

It is no commonplace series of successes and reverses in a human enterprise that she lays before her correspondents, it is the varied manifestation of God's action in a supernatural work, which she recognises with heart full of emotion, and describes in letters replete with impulses of admiration and submission. Over and over again in them she calls directly upon God, and as often begs the pious recipient of the letter to thank and bless Him with her. Her correspondence never seems to distract her mind from the sense of God's presence, habitual to her. His presence is rather the peculiar atmosphere of her letters, which only follow the train of thought which is her habit; they progress with impulsive movements from the heart, exclamations springing from the pen-like ejaculatory prayers. No good news is told without an act of thanksgiving.

After God, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia put her trust in His earthly representative. Rome was always attracting her; she was constantly talking of it. In this year, 1836, her letters are full of allusions to it, to the foundation preparing there, and the Constitutions there being reprinted. Gathered round Gregory XVI. was a little circle of holy personages, devoted friends of the Good Shepherd, who sustained Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's grand hopes for the future of the Institute. Chief among them was Father Kohlmann, who held the appointment of Secretary to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He had the reputation of being both saintly and learned, and had spent his life in an apostleship fruitful to the Church. Of Alsatian origin, he had made his studies at Fribourg, in Switzerland, and after his ordination, had entered the Congregation of Priests of the Sacred Heart, just after it was amalgamated with that of the Fathers of the Faith. During the Revolution, he found scope for his zeal in Germany, Austria, and North Italy: now in missions, making many converts from Protestantism; now visiting hospitals and prisons, and winning back to their duties many poor creatures who had long neglected the sacraments; or, again, performing prodigies of zeal among soldiers of the Padua garrison stricken with typhus fever.

When he learnt that the Society of Jesus still survived in Russia, he sought admission there. In 1805 he was in the Novitiate at Duneberg. He was then thirty-four years old. In the second year of his

novitiate he was sent as a missionary to America. There his apostolic ministry was crowned by an incident which created a great sensation. Summoned to appear before the Law Courts at New York, to denounce a person who, under the seal of confession, had intrusted to him a large sum of money to be returned to a merchant of the city from whom it had been stolen, his defence of the secrecy of the sacrament was so eloquent that it converted his judges into admirers, and he was acquitted in the name of religious liberty.

When the Roman College was opened, his superiors summoned him thither to teach theology. In Rome the number of conversions due to his ministry attracted much notice. Among them that of Theiner, the celebrated German writer, was the most notable. Theiner had lost his faith, and, although strongly prejudiced against the Jesuits, some interior attraction impelled him to go and see Father Kohlmann at the Gèsu. He afterwards became an Oratorian.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's work, with a Mother House as a seminary for missionaries as the peculiar feature of its organisation, struck Father Kohlmann as differing from any other yet established in the Church for the conversion of sinners.

Popes Gregory XVI. and Leo XII. alike had great confidence in his judgment, and the position this gave him enabled him, not only to defend Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia in her work, but to obtain favours for

her. When the Constitutions were being drawn up, he placed his accurate knowledge of Canon Law and theology at her service; and when any question affecting the establishment of the Generalat was raised, he was always her adviser. The augmentation of individual zeal through combination in a general congregation had been that which had attracted him at mature age to the Society of Jesus, and he was therefore all the more ready to sympathise with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia.

A Franciscan father, Father Vaures, the French Penitentiary at St. Peter's, was another of those who cordially entered into her vast designs. He had been brought up in the little seminary at Nantes, knew the Vendéen temperament, and thought her work would be for the great good of the Church. As interpreter to the distinguished French visitors to whom the Pope gave audience, he was often in his Holiness's presence, and used these opportunities to speak of the Good Shepherd. He and Mother Pelletier kept up a touching correspondence. He executed her commissions in the Eternal City, sent her relics, had her Constitutions printed, and spoke to her often of the good that French nuns would do in Rome if established there. It was through him her connection with Cardinal Odescalchi began. At his suggestion she asked the Pope to appoint the Cardinal-Vicar Protector of the Institute, and it was he, acting as her agent in relation to Cardinal Odescalchi, and with her authority, who kept constantly before the Cardinal the

interests of the Institute. Even before he became acquainted with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's work, the Cardinal had formed a similar conception for a religious order to be founded in Italy. On the 15th November 1836, he wrote to Angers: "Mgr. Flaget is a person whom I greatly esteem. He and I often talk together of the daughters of the Good Shepherd, and hope soon to see them in Rome. Such is my desire, but a desire which must be laid every day before the altar to bring about its accomplishment, and you too must pray for this important object. God willed that I should be your Protector, and I adore His will; but, with all my heart, I pray to Him to make me of real use to your community. Meantime, go where the good God calls you; go, seeking only the glory of God and the good of souls. Restore to poor sinful women the peace they have lost, and, doing this great work, you will win your eternal crown. A thousand blessings. Your affectionate Protector,

"C. Card. Odescalchi."

Happy in the possession of such friends and holy protectors, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia used, in time of trial, to animate her own courage and that of her religious with such words as these: "At Rome, near the Pope, are our best friends." These relations with Rome were very favourable to the extension of the Good Shepherd: they lent to it something of the universality of the Church.

The Mother loved to reproduce in her convent devotions in use at Rome. Thus, M. de Neuville, wishing to give her special pleasure, and knowing her so intimately as to be aware of even the individualities of her piety, had placed in the chapel a waxen figure of St. Philomena enclosed in a beautiful shrine, like the one in the church in Rome.

He and Mme. d'Andigné multiplied their gifts as if in emulation of the Mother's gratitude. Once M. de Neuville sent her three louis with these words: "I do not know why, but I feel urged by Our Lady to send you three louis: you will find them enclosed." One of his small "foundations" had been what was called "Mary's Purse:" it was money never used by the Mother except in great necessity, and, that very day, she had been obliged to take it all to meet a pressing bill. When giving the last pieces of gold to her daughters, she had said, "Tell Our Lady, my children, that I only lend it to you, and beg her to return it to us," and the same evening M. de Neuville sent his present. Another day, in the same year, he sent the whole of some furniture he had inherited from his aunt, Madame de Goyon. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia looked upon this generous treatment from the servants of God as infallibly pointing to great purposes in His Providence for the Institute.

She could never show her gratitude to her own satisfaction. The more united to God, the more deeply

penetrated with the spirit of the Gospel, so much the more is the soul prone to gratitude, for true gratitude is but participation in that eternal act of thanksgiving which Jesus Christ and His saints offer to God for all His benefits. She thought of it as a sacred and agreeable duty, entering into the spirit of the saints, whose lives are spent in thanking God. Just souls delight in acknowledging the goodness of those who give where they do not owe. Mother Pelletier never tired of telling her daughters that gratitude was one of their most sacred duties. Once, on a week day, when she had to write to M. de Neuville, she thought it better to miss part of the office in choir rather than fail in duty to her benefactor. At the close of 1836, she assembled the Community to make a solemn promise to have celebrated annually in perpetuity twelve Masses for M. de Neuville and Mme. d'Andigné, and to bring up two orphans for the intention of the latter. The acts of these foundations were framed, and placed in the convent chapel.

Busy as she was by day and often by night in those first years of foundation, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia always fulfilled the duties of hospitality with exquisite delicacy. She always won the esteem of her visitors, who left her recognising the hand of God in her work.

A venerable priest, M. Charvoz, curé of Mont Louis, in the diocese of Tours, brother of one of the religious of the Refuge, who visited Angers in 1836, was so

struck by the Mother's reception that, in his admiration for her virtues and beautiful work for souls, he had no sooner returned to his parish than he wrote her the following letter:

"VENERABLE MOTHER,—I have had the happiness of beholding you, of hearing you, and of seeing with admiration that God showers His favours on you abundantly. He thus proves that the earth is His, and that He made it, and is accountable to none. I know no better explanation of that passage in the Psalms of David.

"He has created, as it were, a lesser world in six mystic days, in a delicious garden, where are no forbidden fruits nor any tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and if the wicked serpent rears his head and looks into it, he finds no one to speak to him. The shepherdess of the Good Shepherd has been made to weep indeed, but those tears have made the soil productive. No great work was ever founded without costing tears to the Founder: but dry your eyes, good Mother, and thank those who have made you weep. Pardon my repeating to you once more that you should take care of yourself, not for your own sake certainly, but that you may be able to complete the work you have begun. Delay going to heaven a little while, so that a greater multitude may follow you."

A great many postulants now came to the "Good

Shepherd," and every year there were numerous professions; still, the Mother's zeal continued to be greatly taxed to meet all the demands for foundations which she found it impossible to refuse. That of Puy was one which peculiarly attracted her. The request for it came from a Bishop of eminent piety, Mgr. de Bonald; and it was also asked for by Father Valentin, a Jesuit, who was preaching a retreat at the Good Shepherd when the letter arrived, and was himself sent to Puy as Superior of the Jesuit house there. Another Jesuit Father, who was associated with him in giving the retreat, Father Arthur Martin, a true Breton from St. Anne's, and an archæologist, encouraged Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia also by laying before her his convictions concerning the future assigned to the Good Shepherd in the Church.

In the midst of all her cares with regard to the Puy foundation, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was called upon to pass through a time of terrible trial. Sickness fell upon the house. In a few days there were twenty-eight in the Infirmary, out of whom three lay sisters died. From the first outbreak of the malady, the Mother spent long hours in the Infirmary, comforting and encouraging her children, and one day she imparted to them an idea with which God had inspired her. Might it not be that these grievous afflictions were sent because of the delays in making the foundation at Puy? This thought took such possession of her that, unable to resist its influence, she went to the sisters

whom she proposed sending to Puy, and said to them, "My children, you must go; you have to make your sacrifice; the malady will not cease until you have started."

It was winter; there were mountains covered with snow and ice to be crossed; but hasty preparations were made, and the colonists set out upon their journey, filled not only with zeal for the conversion of sinners, but with sympathy for their Mother, and hoping to bring relief to their sick sisters.

The Mother was heart-broken by the spectacle surrounding her of her daughters sick and dying. She looked for consolation and prayers among friends and protectors, to whom she wrote telling them of her troubles. M. Alleron, her old friend and confessor, the parish priest of Notre Dame la Riche, and Superior of the Carmelite Convent at Tours, wrote her a letter of touching consolation, dated 6th January 1837:

"If I tell you that I share all the sorrow now afflicting your maternal heart, and that I rejoice in your successes, admire the marvels of Providence, and thank and praise God with you, I am only telling you what you already know. God is now taking back what He gave you: trust His word; have confidence. He will restore you a hundredfold. He who could raise children to Abraham out of stones, can certainly send you others to replace the dear ones whom He has so soon called to their reward, because they had doubtless in a short time fulfilled a long career. They carry with them their robe of spotless

white, and shall for ever wear it as they follow the Immaculate Lamb. Ought I to pity you, desolate Mother? No! for the light of faith has already shone upon you. Ought I to pity them? No! for, however happy they were with you, they will be a thousand times happier in heaven. Rejoice in the Lord that your children have gone before you, and guide those left with tireless care and zeal along the road which is so difficult, the road of salvation. The devil hates you. He has desired to have you as he did Peter, but our Lord prays for you that your faith may not fail, that like Him you may confirm your sisters."

These trials came at last to an end. On the 21st January, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, writing to the Superioress at Poitiers, says: "Ah! what crosses we have had, my beloved daughters! In a single week, we buried three young novices, innocent victims, whom I recommend to your prayers. Oh, how they suffered! I never left them, and am therefore in arrears."

It was from Father Valentin that the first news of her daughters at Puy reached the Mother. He promised that they should have every spiritual assistance, the Jesuits' house being only a quarter of an hour's distance from Puy. Mgr. de Bonald's charity to them was most touching. He entertained them at his table; recommended them to M. Lacoste, his Vicar General, and to his own two brothers; told their chaplain to adapt his hours to those most favourable to the fulfil-

ment of their rule, it being his wish that Puy should exactly reproduce Angers.

The sisters undertook the direction of a house where certain devout persons had a few penitents. Through Mgr. de Bonald the sisters were put in communication with Mlle. de la Roche-Négly, a lady who had greatly desired their coming, and who gave them such large alms that she was, in a certain sense, their foundress. Viscount Charles Amable de la Roche Négly de Mende was another great benefactor. In fact, thanks to the zeal of Mgr. de Bonald, who formerly had been confessor to the penitents at the Refuge of Paris, the daughters of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia were received at Puy as emissaries of God.

The saintly Bishop showed his interest in a thousand ways: he came to see them, said holy Mass in their chapel, sent them furniture, blankets, linen, and started an association of charity in their favour. The priests of his household had never seen him exhibit such zeal for any other work, and it reminded the sisters of the devoted attentions good "Father" de Neuville had shown to the house at Angers.

One point particularly pleased them. The Bishop was very tenacious about their having means for fulfilling their rule, even in the most minute points, as to enclosure, confessions, or other spiritual exercises. He held that religious have no better way of attracting the blessing of God than by keeping up their

primitive spirit and scrupulously observing their rules. He used often to tell them, and make others tell them, to do everything in the spirit of their Mother General.

For instance, when so many penitents came that the number exceeded the small resources for their reception, the Bishop asked what was their rule regarding these admissions, and how their Mother General acted under similar circumstances. They told him Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia never knew how to refuse entrance to the Good Shepherd to any truly repentant soul, even when her resources seemed quite inadequate.

It was the Bishop's desire that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia should be the soul of the little colony in his diocese, as of the great monastery at Angers. Souls must be versed in the science of the saints to understand the virtue attached to imitating those chosen by God to be the instruments of His works. There is a kind of terrestrial reproduction of the communion of saints between souls who do His work in the same order and the same spirit. Our Lord recommended union in prayer; He promised to listen to those who should pray in common; and He also hears and grants the desires of those who unite in action, who labour together in works of charity.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia entirely sympathised with the Bishop's views. On the 30th January 1839, she wrote to her daughters at Puy: "Never was a

foundation so blessed by God; never was grace more visible. Your details dry our tears. After thanking Jesus and Mary, the first longing of my soul is humbly to thank Mgr. de Bonald, who is to us a father and a holy founder. Give him my most humble respects, and beseech him to bless us. Implore him to give you leave not to refuse a single penitent. Assure him that there is no risk in receiving all, but, on the contrary, that to have done so secured the triumph of our Mother House. Tell him what I think about it all." Then she sent a kind message to each of the other benefactors, Mlle. de la Roche Négly, Father Valentin, Father de Bussi, and others.

When she received a letter from any of her daughters, if it contained any edifying details about the founders, or anything that redounded to the credit of the penitents, she used to assemble the Community and read it aloud; then she showed it or read it to Mme. d'Andigné and M. de Neuville. It was her delight to let others share whatever pleased her. She enjoyed the happiness of others far more than her own. She used even to ask her daughters to write letters to M. de Neuville, in which they should give him an account of all the consoling features of their foundations. It was one of the points to which she paid great attention; she liked benefactors of the Good Shepherd to have that highest of temporal rewards, the sight and knowledge of the good produced through their liberality

When she saw the success of a work, it used always to remind her of the benefactor to whom it was due.

As we have already often remarked, another thing Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia loved was to live in thought with the daughters from whom distance separated her: she liked to know what was their life, if they were well, and how their benefactors were; for the latter, in her opinion, became, through their charity, members of the great Good Shepherd family. "Now let us talk about Puy," she wrote, on the 17th June 1837: "have you been turned out of your house? How many poor sheep have you? Tell them how dearly we love them. Hold fast always to your rule, to union, peace, and zeal for the salvation of souls. Be the pillar of the work. How is your holy Bishop? He is unequalled as a father. How we reverence and appreciate him. We do indeed owe him a great debt, and we pray for him daily.

Again, writing to the same Superioress at Puy, she says: "If you want any little thing, my daughter, let us know. Have you any postulants? I like to know everything. And your fifty penitents? Precious flock, we send them our blessing. We like all you tell us very much, and then the account of the great conversion is our delight."

She desired that annual circulars should be sent out by the different houses, in order to establish among all a more intimate connection, and that she and all

her daughters might mutually be edified by the good done in the Institute. The circulars were to be what she called a general conversation among the sisters about all the important facts connected with their vocation, and they were also to become material for the archives of the monastery. In her instructions she says: "Do you know, my dear daughters, what, in my own mind, I call the Community letters? Well, I call them Christmas flowers." December and January are the springtime of the Good Shepherd year. They are the two months when it is given to us to walk among the fields of our Institute gathering those flowers, the scent of which refreshes us and fortifies our zeal. I confess to you, my little children, that, often after reading one of the circulars, I am provided with food for meditation which lasts me more than a week. I love to consider the tiny oak apple that our Blessed Lady caused to be put into the ground by her poor slave. I have seen it develop and grow year by year, and now I see it a robust oak tree, spreading out branches and verdant foliage, and affording shelter to thousands of poor wounded sheep.

"But if our Community letters are to be Christmas flowers, it will not do to put off sending them until April or June; and to be like flowers they must be simply and affectionately written.

"Let us reciprocally offer one another our good wishes. Give an account frankly and simply of what has been done, and so, by your edifying words, your religious style, you will make the work of the

Good Shepherd known and loved, and give us the consolation of spending many happy moments.

"Regarding the size of the paper you use for these letters, we wish you to adopt leaves exactly like our Coutumier, so that, year by year, the different letters that come may all be bound together."

CHAPTER XVII

STRASBURG—SENS—RHEIMS

1836

Reconciliation with M. Dufêtre—The Constitutions—Re-election—Foundation at Strasburg—Mother Pelletier's joy in the conversion of a Protestant—Foundation at Sens—Mother Pelletier's journey—Mgr. de Cosnac—Church of St. Savinien—Reverence of the servant of God for ancient sanctuaries—Foundation at Rheims—M. Gros—Letters of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to her daughters at Rheims.

We have said that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was careful to let her friends share her joys. Another trait was her sensitiveness to opposition proceeding from servants of God. Time had no effect in hardening her to this, and she exercised much tact and holy ingenuity in trying to gain their good will.

An instance of the kind occurred about this time. M. Dufêtre, Vicar General of Tours, who, as will be remembered, had been one of the chief opponents of the Generalat, came to Angers to preach, an opportunity of which the Mother availed herself to try and obtain a reconciliation which she had never ceased to desire; and Mgr. Montault, no less anxious for it than herself, did all he could to prepare her way.

Immediately on Mgr. Dufêtre's arrival, a *tourière* sister was despatched from the Good Shepherd to inquire after his health. Then he visited the convent, and,

to do him honour, the Rev. Mother assembled all her religious to receive him. These delicate attentions touched him, and, when addressing the Community, to their great edification he acknowledged that he had been mistaken, and that all he saw before him was truly God's work. Then, at the Mother's request, he blessed a little chapel for the class of St. Michael, dedicated to St. Joseph.

He wrote to her after his visit: "God be praised! my heart is both comforted and gladdened. I feel that I love you as a daughter, and I also reverence in you the well-beloved spouse of the Lord. Henceforth I shall look on your work as my own, and shall ever take a warm interest in it, and you may ever count on my sincere devotedness."

She had been very open with him, very anxious to please and satisfy him; and, after a month's interval, he wrote again: "Your frank simple explanations, my dear daughter, have done me good. Let there be no cloud, no difficulty between us henceforth. No, indeed I shall not fail you in your work, but shall rather ask the Lord to make me worthy to co-operate with you, and to give me some share in the immense merits of your Congregation."

The year 1837 was rich in favours of various kinds for the Good Shepherd. From Rome Father Vaures sent printed copies of the new Constitutions, according to the decree of the Generalat.

At the same time came a dispensation from one year of novitiate for Mme. de Couëspel, and she was

professed by Mgr. Montault before a large and very distinguished congregation. The choir grating was thrown open for the occasion, and ladies were admitted into the enclosure.

Printed Constitutions were sent to all the foundations, and in all received with the same respect and joy as at the Mother House, where a copy was placed under Our Lady's feet in the choir; and there, as well as in each house, litanies, prayers, and processions were offered to God in thanksgiving.

There was a great renewal of fervour throughout the houses, all manifesting an admirable spirit of submission and loyalty to the Mother House.

About this time Mother Pelletier recalled a Sister from Metz, who had only been there a few months, and who was very useful to the foundation; but the Sisters did not allow the slightest murmur to escape them, and their chaplain wrote afterwards that, having ventured to urge some reasons for her being retained at Metz, he found himself treated almost as if under the ban of excommunication.

On the 11th May 1837, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was, for the second time, re-elected as Superioress General of the Order. Mgr. Montault presided at the ceremony, and addressed her in these words: "May the graces hitherto vouchsafed to you be shed on you afresh and more abundantly, according to the needs of your daily increasing burden." Then he added: "This house, which was so miraculously founded, and which has grown so miraculously, is the

glory of my Episcopate. The works of charity done here will last eternally."

Immediately afterwards, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her Council decided upon the foundations asked for at Strasburg, Sens, and Rheims. The Bishop of Strasburg, Mgr. de Trevern, had written, in November 1836, to the Mother Superior, asking for a convent of her religious. Before giving a decided answer, the good Mother charged Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross, Superioress at Nancy, to visit the house offered, and to see the future benefactors.

"From our Monastery of the Mount of Olives,
November 16th, 1836.

"'Live, Jesus and Mary.'

"'I am in retreat.'

"'Love is strong as death.'

"My very dear daughter, leaning upon God, and relying on your obedience, I am going to tell you of my troubles with sweet confidence. I must ask you whether it would be possible for you, with Monseigneur's leave, to whom I send my grateful respects, to quit your dear fold at Nancy for four days to go to Strasburg? You would have to represent us to the Bishop there. Do just what he tells you: choose a place for us, write us the result, say when the colony could be sent, and find out about the local resources. In a word, my dear Sister, do all we should do ourselves if we were able to go. You will be the bearer of a letter I enclose to the

Bishop of Strasburg: read it first, then seal it, and take it with you. Take Mary of St. Raphael with you, or some one else, if you prefer it; but I think she would be the best. Ah! my dear Sister, try to fulfil the mission Providence gives you: you will be rendering the greatest service to your Mother House."

In spite of severe winter weather and the serious state of her own health, Mother Mary of St. John of the Cross left Nancy, where her Assistant took her place. At Strasburg she was received as Heaven-sent by Mgr. de Trevern and Mme. Schuster. She sent a long report to the Mother General of all she saw, told her of the excellent disposition of the people in Strasburg, even Jews and Protestants being anxious to have a refuge for poor penitents.

To this letter Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent the following reply:

"FROM OUR MONASTERY AT ANGERS,
December 8th, 1836.

"'Live, Jesus and Mary!'

"'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.'

"My dearest daughter, you told me you would be the Sister Anne of St. Bartholomew. May God's blessing rest for ever on all you have done. How often, my very dear child, did our thoughts follow you on your holy errand! Day and night we lived

with you, were with you in spirit on your dreadful roads and mountains. I was expecting you, and here you are. [*Saturday, 10th December.*] Your welcome letter from Colmar has come, and rejoices us. God has blessed your administration. Yes! blessed a thousand times be the day you were chosen for this mission. We approve of everything you have done. We agree to Easter as the date of foundation. Both the house and price suit us; so everything is satisfactory. May God reward you, my very dear child. Try to write a few lines to Mme. Schuster, and thus complete the work of grace and love. On our part, we shall send her a copy of the deed when we have had it written out. Take the same care of this work as of the house at Nancy. We give you full permission to act as you think best. Try to get our Blessed Lady to give us the postulant you mention.

"And as for yourself, finish the beautiful work you have begun. The worse the country is, so much the greater is the need for us to send zealous daughters of our Order to sacrifice themselves there. How much I have to say to you, my child; and when shall I see you? I feel strongly about Strasburg, and a powerful voice leads me there. You must not fail in the work.

"Look well after the needs of your poor children, and, believe me, the means will come some day; and there are so many souls to save! The difficulty is the German language. What is to be done about it? I think it would be wise to learn it on the spot, and at

Easter we shall send subjects who understand it. What do you think? Or shall we send you two Sisters to Nancy to be taught?

"I cannot tell you how dear you are all to us, and we never forget you. What did you do at Colmar, my dear daughters? Did not you come across any aspirants? We send the Community letter, which will rejoice you. Adieu, adieu! my dearest child. Your attached

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Her belief was strong that, when God granted the Institute many favours, He multiplied crosses, in order that they might be merited.

Mother Mary of St. John had scarcely returned from Strasburg when she was tried by the death of one of her religious.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote thus to her:

"*December 15th*, 1836.

"'Thou hast proved me, that I may be made worthy of Thee, O Lord.'

"I feel overwhelmed with grief, my dearly loved daughter, to see you still in the thick of the battle, while the dear companion of your grievous labours is in heaven. Oh! dear child of our heart, Mary of St. Benedict, I mourn for thee! but Strasburg has now its immolated victim."

She sent the first colony of her daughters to Strasburg, in May 1837. They were received at the Convent of the Dames de la Providence on their arrival, and only gradually got settled in the house bought for them. The greatest kindness and charity were shown them by M. Mertian and Mme. Schuster, who watched over all their needs. M. Liebermann, Vicar-general, and a Trappist monk, the Rev. Father Mary-Joseph (Baron de Géramb), also showed them great kindness.

Protestants vied in generosity with Catholics, bringing food for the penitents, and furniture for the house. Some, who had been reared in prejudice, so entirely altered their opinion that they asked if the nuns were not rather angels from heaven than mere human beings.

The difference of language was, however, at first a serious impediment to the zeal of the Sisters. The penitents, generally of the poorer class, could not speak any French. After a time, however, a postulant of the country sought admission, and was received with the Mother's consent, and taught German to the religious. It was a great joy to the Mother when she heard that a Protestant had been converted: it appeared to her that by such a grace her flock gained incalculable value in the eyes of the Divine Shepherd. Another joy was the spiritual care of the Jesuit fathers over the convent at Strasburg. In Advent 1837, one gave a Retreat in French for the nuns, another Father one in German for the penitents.

The Mother General lived to see this foundation pass through all the various stages of growth. When the number of recruits increased, a first change of residence was made; and subsequently, in 1864, the beautiful house of Robertsun was bought.

She looked upon this foundation, the first on the Rhine, as a special grace granted by God to the Institute. In the first year she wrote the following letter to her *confidante*, the Superioress at Nancy, who had worked harder for it than any one else:

"From our Monastery at Angers,
June 28th, 1837.

"Charity is kind, is patient; and yours, my daughter, needs largely to partake of this character; but truly I can no longer refrain from writing: your last letter gave me so much pleasure. You know the labours of our Sion, and they are constantly on the increase, but also what great graces we receive. The birth of our four new tribes has been the source of many troubles, many consolations. I do not think anything in our holy Order has ever equalled Strasburg. How I thank you, my child, for having helped me in this marvellous work, which is doing so much good. I think, too, it is the portal into Germany. Jesus, Mary, and the house at Nancy will always remain the three primary causes of the work in Germany. What consolation your account of the progress made gives me! I shall not be able, my very dear Sister, to go and see you until next

spring. This year I must not make any visits: I am sure you understand, do you not? At this moment we are preparing twenty postulants, your dear and precious conquest among them. She is indeed a treasure. These innocent maidens are to receive the holy habit on the 10th July. We expect four from Strasburg. My God, how good Thou art!"

While her daughters were settling at Strasburg, a place where the work has always prospered, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was holding correspondence with Mgr. de Cosnac, the Archbishop of Sens, with reference to a foundation in that city. Had she followed the dictates of her own zeal she would have accepted immediately, but prudence restrained her. The Mother House, already heavily burdened with obligations, was hardly able to undertake the purchase of another. Under these circumstances, the Mother followed her usual practice when she had either some important matter to consider or some mental difficulty to contend with: she gave herself up to increased and fervent prayer. One evening, when she and the Sisters, during recreation, were walking among the trees in the enclosure, she left the Community, and, going into the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, threw herself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin to tell her of all her doubts and difficulties. When she came away she said to her daughters, with the utter simplicity of perfect faith, "I heard Our Lady say to me interiorly, 'I shall be

happy at Sens in the heart of your daughters.'" There was no further hesitation. She wrote to Mgr. de Cosnac that, in a very short time, her daughters would go to him to begin their work, with the assistance of his prayers and advice.

The house they found at Sens was small and bare. The first thing put into it was a picture of our Blessed Lady. It was brought to the Sisters the day following their arrival by the porter. He told them he had found it in the garret, and had intended to use it in mending some tapestry. When told by the Sisters that it was a picture of the Blessed Virgin, he said he had never heard of her. They first gave him a little lesson in his catechism about our Blessed Lady, then placed the picture reverently upon a table in the chapel, thinking the incident a good omen.

But difficulties soon arose: Mgr. de Cosnac wished them to have no work but that of a boarding-school. The Mother and her daughters had often to contend with this difficulty, for even their benefactors could not comprehend that the Institute had one special end. Persons interested in them were very often anxious they should have the care of schools for young ladies, who were able to pay well for their education, considering this a method also of bringing the foundations into notice.

Nor were these schools refused by the Good Shepherd where there was any real necessity. In various large towns in France, America, and other countries,

schools were founded with brilliant success for young ladies of the most affluent class. They combined thorough religious instruction with the most finished education. The Convent of the Good Shepherd at Montreal, in Canada, has served as a model to other Catholic schools for young girls.

But these schools always hold a secondary place in the purpose of the Institute. The principal one is the conversion of penitents. It was therefore impossible for the Mother General to permit her daughters at Sens to begin their life there with this kind of work, which, however meritorious in itself, to them could only be of a secondary character. She did not mind fatigue when there was any question of the good of her Order, and to smooth away the difficulties which had occurred, set out for Sens in the month of July.

Mgr. de Cosnac, good and holy as he was, was incapable of withstanding designs so purely supernatural as hers. But written arguments are always wanting in that warmth which the just man finds so irresistible when brought into direct relations with the pure zeal which has no trace of the human spirit, no thought but the good of others; and, after his interview with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, Mgr. de Cosnac consented to her carrying out the grand plan which, there and elsewhere, was her ideal for the Institute.

Preparations for the reception of penitents were immediately started, the old Archbishop himself, in

spite of his eighty years, visiting the work two or three times a week to superintend and hasten its progress.

Great zeal for the Good Shepherd, much confidence in Sister Mary of St. Philip, the local Superioress, a religious of no common fervour and energy, animated the venerable prelate. Since 1793 there had been no procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of Sens on the feast of Corpus Christi, and when, in 1838, its revival was suggested, Mgr. de Cosnac, fearing to provoke a riot after its having been discontinued for so long, hesitated to sanction its renewal.

Mother Mary of St. Philip, however, from constant intercourse with her penitents, and their connections with the labouring class, was better acquainted than the Archbishop with the existing state of feeling, and, upon her reassurance, he permitted the procession.

Afterwards he thanked her, and told her that in all his archiepiscopal life nothing had ever given him the same consolation.

The procession came to the Good Shepherd, the Sisters having prepared a beautiful altar of repose.

Sister Mary of St. Philip carefully informed the Mother General of every joy and difficulty at the new foundation. She sent little pictures and other devotional objects for the novices at Angers; and, in her great love of the Divine Office, had the offices of the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary printed,

copies of which she sent to the Mother House. All these filial attentions touched Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and earned her affectionate gratitude. In one letter she describes the religious and novices singing the new office in the choir, and their appreciation of it, and then goes on to speak of troubles and consolations of her own.

"I am always needing you, my dear Mary of St. Philip. You must not die: what should I do without you!"

In letters to her daughters no restraint is placed upon her zeal; there is always the same ardour for the work, the same trust in Providence. She looked upon Sens as the Blessed Virgin's own house; her confidence in it was derived from this thought, whence she also drew the encouragements she addressed to Sister Mary of St. Philip. Her pious practice of confiding each work to the care of some saint increased her confidence and devotion, and she liked to enlist the interest of particular saints in this way. All devotional practices were to her roads leading to God, and she knew that fervour is sustained by variety. One of her customs was always to say the *Laudate* when God sent her a cross. In writing to Sister Mary of St. Philip, she reckons the crosses of the week by the number of *Laudates* she has said.

We have already mentioned her great devotion to sanctuaries hallowed by the lives or martyrdoms of saints. It was therefore a cause of much joy to her

when, in 1844, her daughters' removal at Sens from their first house to St. Peter le Vif led to the restoration of Divine worship in the Church of St. Savinian, built on the spot where that great apostle of the district had suffered martyrdom. She who had so rejoiced in rekindling the lamp extinguished in the Benedictine convent at Saumur by the storm of the Revolution, rejoiced still more in this restoration of prayer over a saint's tomb.

The church belonged to the Archdiocese, and stood just outside the enclosure. The religious were allowed the use of it on condition that they decorated it, and opened it to the faithful, on the titular feast and during the Octave.

At recreation and in her spiritual addresses, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia used to talk to the religious about foundations, those already existing, those she hoped for in the future. She told them the news received from the beloved colonies, or of requests for new foundations, her words kindling the fire of her own apostolic zeal in the hearts of her hearers.

Early in 1837 she entered into correspondence with M. Gros, Vicar General of Rheims. The Bishop, Cardinal de Latil, wished for a foundation in the ancient town of St. Remy. In the month of June some religious were sent, whom, in the Cardinal's absence at Rome, were received by the Bishop Coadjutor, Mgr. de Coussi, and M. Gros. Mgr. de Coussi welcomed them with gratitude and encourag-

ing words. He told them that Sisters of the Good Shepherd, whose work is to harbour destitute souls and restore them to God, are certain not to be abandoned by Divine Providence.

At first the religious stayed at the Convent of Notre Dame, and later moved to a house M. Gros bought for them. He was their earthly providence, and became their champion and defender when the civil authorities opposed the foundation. The Sisters had learned from their Mother never to be surprised at opposition, and to fight, when necessary, for the good cause.

The method of defence suggested by their Mother Foundress was to form as soon as possible their flock of penitents and preservation children. In a very short time there were more than the house could hold, and a larger one was required, which M. Gros found for them with gardens and courts.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia undertook to pay part of the purchase money, and also gave a portion of the dowry of a rich postulant who came from Rheims. This house filled as rapidly as had the other.

The Mother's direction of her daughters at Rheims, by means of affectionate letters, written to them during the first few months, is a touching instance of her usual way of founding her houses and making them acceptable. Her first step had been to send Mother Mary of. St Louis from Sens to visit the house offered at Rheims.

"ANGERS, *June 8th*, 1837.

"TO OUR DEAR, OUR BELOVED MARY OF ST. LOUIS,—How are you, my child? How are you while pursuing your way along your path of obedience? What a privation it is not to see you! There are many things I should like to say to you before you set out on your noble mission to Rheims. Oh, what grace you require, my dear Sister! Draw down more and more upon your own soul God's favours; be full of courage in helping us; leave our dear Sens on Monday; go to Bon la Fontaine; in fact, do all that is said in the note. Keep Sister Selina for three or six months as *tourière*. Later I will try to have you here for a week or fortnight, to help in all our great works, my faithful daughter. As soon as you have seen the house at Rheims, write to us. You can understand the pleasure it will give me to hear from you. Your last letter did me much good.

"I still hope about Sens, for, as you say, Grenoble, and even Angers, had more to suffer. Good-bye, my dearest daughter. I love you much, very much. . . . I am starting for Saumur, overwhelmed with work; but let us bless God. Ah, what a grand work it is, and how holy is our dear Congregation! Your attached

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

As soon as her daughters were settled at Rheims, she wrote very often to them, and her letters directed, supported, and helped them to begin their work in the true spirit of the Order.

"From our Monastery of Angers,
July 2nd, 1837.

"'The Lord hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.'

"My very dear, my beloved daughters, just a line not to delay the enclosed (a legal paper). My dear daughters, in all things be led by the Spirit of God, that everything may conduce to His glory and that of the holy work. Be diligent in the virtues of the religious state, for I have noticed that we can do nothing without them.

"Strasburg and Rheims are greatly favoured by God; the news we receive from both are our consolation in the midst of our labours, which are always increasing.

"How happy for us, my dear daughters, to have found a friend in M. Gros. He is a father to the work, one that will carry it on in God's way. Prepare yourselves then, my dear daughters, for great labours, especially for the Penitents and Preservation class. You will have many children.

"Our sisters love you, have you in their very hearts, and pray for the success of the beautiful mission that the Lord has trusted to you. May He also give you the graces and light you need.

"We have now twelve grown-up children settled in France, and almost every day receive some family news. The Divine Shepherd visits our tribes: some with crosses, some with graces. All are dear to us in Him, and stir us up to bless Him for their sakes.

At this moment the houses in the North are the most solid. It is the Lord's pleasure to send them many blessings. Let us then, my dear daughters, be very faithful.

"Pray for her who tenderly loves you in the Most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.—Your attached,

"MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Then in a postscript:—

"It grieves me very much, my dearest daughters, that I can only write you a few words, you, my dear Mary of St. Louis and St. Timothy, who have just given us such great joy by your most comforting letters. But once you are in your own house, my beloved daughters, I will write you a long letter. God be blessed a thousand times for the foundation at Rheims. May He also bless good M. Gros, whom we revere, and shall always regard as the father of the work. His letter has done a great deal of good, even in our foundation. Offer also my respects and our deep gratitude to those ladies. I embrace my poor Sister St. Nathalie. Send us your address, my daughters, most dear to our hearts, blessed by God and Mary. It seems to me this foundation will be great and beautiful. We shall pray for you continually. Send us news of your dear selves.

"Here I am overwhelmed with business and crosses; but oh! how many graces too, a thousand times more than the sufferings. We have twenty-five postulants.

Send us ten every year, my little (Mary of St.) Timothy. You have already promised me two."

Mother Pelletier's letters are always a Mother's unrestrained, affectionate conversations with her daughters, a Mother who sees them and enters into their smallest interests. She sees, too, all the greatness of their mission, and sustains them in the supernatural.

"Begin this beautiful work in the Spirit of God and your holy vocation. We will support you. Just now we might say with St. Paul that we suffer strange things: it is impossible, at whatever cost of self-sacrifice, to reply to all the demands made.

"It appears that the foundation at Rheims will be as beautiful as a foundation can be, that it will have two classes and plenty of children. How consoling this is. God is much more glorified in us when our houses are numerous. Let us then open our hearts to the poor Penitents. I trust that our Lord and His Divine Mother will not fail us. If we are faithful to our vocation, God will inspire holy souls to come to our assistance, for assuredly our work is His work: He will not abandon it.

"Do it solidly and in the Spirit of God, for that Spirit should permeate our holy vocation. Don't be in too great a hurry to get young people. First of all settle yourselves in order. Make a great foundation. If only you could understand the joy you give me, God alone knows it."

A storm raised against the house at Rheims by the civil authorities threatened to compromise it, but

meanwhile the Mother wrote, encouraging and supporting her daughters with the calm confidence and zeal that a good cause and a Mother's love inspire:—

"From our Monastery at Angers,
August 4th, 1837.

"'Lord, Thou hast proved me that I might be worthy of Thee.'

"My very dear beloved daughter, another trial for you and your two dear companions, whom, like you, we love with tender affection. I have read your letters to skilled business people: they are all of opinion that the Mayor of Rheims cannot drive you away. But we have not the least doubt, my dear daughter, that you will have much to suffer. We pray for you continually. We have been to Communion for your intention. Prayer is the only weapon we can use. The *préfet* neither can nor will interfere. You will find enclosed in this a letter from our worthy founder, which will show you what his feeling is. Mine is that you ought not to give up the holy foundation of Rheims, my dear daughters. Believe me, this storm, like many another, will pass over. Rest firm in the Lord, as a rock in the sea.

"If you want to know what I think, I should let the Mayor do whatever he pleases: if he writes again you will answer that you have nothing to add to what you have already said. If, however, you are sent away by force, you will be received most affectionately here,

my beloved Sisters. But oh! what a pity to lose the foundation, which owes its existence to the zealous M. Gros! It would cause me much regret for the sake of our Order.

"It is quite true, as you will see, that we are wanted in Germany. But I confess to you, my daughter, that I infinitely prefer foundations that are made to those that have to be made. Courage then, dear daughters. If you persist in staying at Rheims, we will send you subjects; but first of all you must be on a firm basis. I expected crosses for you, my very dear daughters. Our three new foundations have all had their share of them, but, thanks be to God, all are safe now."

But the moment a gleam of light appeared in the dark sky, Mother Pelletier's holy joy broke forth in gracious words and pleasant allusions.

"How precious to us is the foundation at Rheims. It seems to us it will flourish greatly. When shall we see your postulants here? Meantime we pray for you with our whole heart. Make a rich harvest of virtues. Keep the interior spirit and peace of soul by the holy exercise of prayer. Love one another tenderly. Then be as gay as lambs springing about the plains of their Good Shepherd."

There is a really touching absence of restraint in the communications between Mother Pelletier and her daughters. It is the good Mother talking with her pen. Her heart opens, and whatever she feels—joy, sorrow—she pours out. Sometimes she writes under

the impression of news just received from some of her convents, sometimes of facts occurring under her own eyes.

This is written just after a letter from Rheims.

"Yesterday, just as I received your most kind letter, one of our young novices passed away in the odour of sanctity, in transports of love, and zeal for the works of the Institute, perpetually offering herself a victim. Her pure soul has gone before the Judge, clad in the double-garment of innocence and charity."

The greatest mark of gratitude a foundation could show to the Mother House, in the Mother-General's esteem, was to send plenty of postulants. In a thousand pleasant ways she asks her daughters for them. She stimulates one by the example of another. In vocations Lille always ranks first. Mother Mary of the Angels understood how to discover solid ones there. She is held up as an example to the Superioress at Rheims. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wishes to have subjects from that district too: she is sure they will have "solidity of mind."

CHAPTER XVIII

BORDEAUX—ARLES, 1837

The house at Bordeaux—The foundation at Arles—Trials of beginnings—Joys—Erection of a Calvary at the convent in Angers—Love shown for it by the servant of God—Numerous sanctuaries and statutes in the convent—Confidence in Providence—M. de Neuville's admiration for the servant of God.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, with her unalterable confidence in Providence, never gave way to discouragement, and what she practised she preached to her daughters, exhorting them to perseverance, especially at the beginnings of a foundation. Nothing was harder to her to admit than that they could be baffled by fatigues or difficulties, and when after a few months the foundation at Bordeaux fell through, she was very much grieved.

It had been asked for by a canon of Bordeaux, M. Dupuch, who afterwards became Bishop of Algiers. He visited the Good Shepherd at Angers in 1837, and, learning of the special devotion of the Community to St. Philomena, to whom he also owed great favours, he looked upon the coincidence as a providential token that this was the Order he ought to place over a Refuge he had been long planning. He talked of all his plans and thoughts upon the subject with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who entirely

entered into his views, and agreed to send some of her religious.

But in a few months' time serious difficulties arose. The Mother General felt the most extreme repugnance to the idea of her daughters abandoning a field of labour where they had done hardly more than turn over the soil, and wrote letter upon letter preaching courage and patience. But the difficulties were of such a nature that at length she was forced to withdraw her daughters. Conditions were laid down which made it impossible for them to follow their rule, or to fulfil the end of their Constitutions. However, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her work always held their original place in M. Dupuch's esteem; and, when he became Bishop of Algiers, he asked again for religious of the Good Shepherd in the interests of the lost sheep of his flock.

The following extracts from the Mother's letters will show with what anxiety she followed her daughters at Bordeaux through the course of their tribulations. Every house of the Order has undergone trials at the beginning; but here they seemed greater and more dangerous than in other places, for the attacks were made against essential points of the Rule. While her daughters were in the thick of the struggle with these and many other embarrassments, the good Mother supported and upheld them from a distance. Writing to Mother St. John of the Cross, August 31st, 1837, she says:—

"The house at Bordeaux is giving us extraordinary

crosses. Alas! my daughter, it has almost failed, and our hearts are really torn. Prudence makes me silent. You would be much grieved, and so are we, and puzzled as well. For the last week we have been expecting the Sisters to come back. Sens is doing better. Strasburg and Rheims are going on perfectly well. The Mother House is overwhelmed with graces; but Bordeaux! oh! my daughter, indeed my heart is wounded. *Fiat!* I pardon them all. Unfortunately, too, there has been a want of courage in Mary of St. Joseph. She has not been able to bear the cross and insults offered to our holy Order, and this has put the finishing touch to our troubles. People seem to have a great contempt for all of us. May the Lord pour His graces on our enemies. Yet the Cross is precious nevertheless. Our Sisters at Bordeaux are in a kind of prison. But, on the other hand, you will see that Rome does not treat us like slaves. It confuses me, humbles me, reduces me to nothingness—oh! far more than do the insults of our enemies. I have sinned so much. But our heavenly Mother's love for her children cannot be told. Oh, Mary! tender Mother, why may I not give my life for Thee!

"You will understand, after all this, that I am very much embarrassed. The works in France are very great: what ought we to do? But, if Jesus Christ speaks, His grace will do all. Pray, and please tell us what you think — everything, my daughter—hide nothing."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's charity did not fail in the attacks of which she was the object. She wrote to Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross:—

"'Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and simple as doves.'

"My very dear daughter, you feel our great need of holding to this Divine oracle. Surrounded by enemies, people who are envious, jealous, prejudiced, our only hope is in the Lord, and our strength in silence. My beloved daughter, you have failed in prudence; oh! you should not have spoken.

"I have just received six pages of reproaches and insults. May the Lord bless our enemies. For the last fortnight we have been in a sea of tempests, crosses, calumnies. *Fiat!* Poor Sister St. Charles, who died on Sunday like a saint, will, I hope, bring this terrible storm to a close. Meantime, the Sisters from Bordeaux are coming back to Angers in a week's time: happy for us if we can even get them all back. But all these trials do not disturb me; on the contrary — oh! the Saint of Saints had many more; and look at St. Teresa—read her life.

"At Bordeaux they want us to have only prisoners under Government, never any works or schools, no enclosure, no garden. We have refused altogether and recalled our Sisters.

"Our chaplain has been at death's door, but is

better; thanks be to God! Mary of St. Eulalia is very ill. Plenty of crosses, you see, my very dear daughter, but the graces far outweigh them. Never has the Congregation received such good subjects; never have there been so many demands for houses; never have the foundations brought so much consolation. Those of Grenoble, Puy, and Rheims are all doing admirable work. That of Sens is going on well; and yours, my daughter, is it not of God? I must tell you I hear it well spoken of."

It was not only directly that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia extended her work; she did so also through the agency of certain religious who had studied it and understood it.

Father Barthès was one of those most zealous in propagating the knowledge of it, thus evoking a desire for its extension. He brought some Catholics from Arles, and among them the Marquis de Mandon, to ask for a foundation in Provence, at the same time, by his pious exhortations, encouraging the Mother to consent, although there was little need of any such stimulus: she was always ready to help a wandering sheep back to the fold, although she was at the same time preparing to make the foundation in Rome. She writes to her habitual confidante, Mother St. John of the Cross. The following letter will show the supernatural view she took of the goodness of Providence towards the Institute:—

"*July* 13*th*, 1837.

"'Lord, I come because Thou hast called me.'

"My very dear, my beloved daughter, your troubles become those of my own soul because of my tender interest in you. Do take care of your health. May our Blessed Lady cure you! I want you so much, my daughter! As to those interior troubles which you have, they foretell great news to come. What miracles! but what labours! You have foretold them often to me: 'My Mother, you will be short of subjects, and will have many demands.'

"Alas! it is true. Rome is fixed for August. Then an illustrious lady, a Marquise, has had an inspiration to found one of our houses in the town of Arles. It is a unique thing. She gives largely, and has bought, by the advice of the Jesuit fathers, the beautiful monastery and splendid church and enclosure of the Minims. When the whole thing was concluded, she wrote to us. What a gift! imagine our surprise! Our Sisters are to go either in September or August. I ask for your prayers and communions. You can imagine my position. Pray for your poor Mother and write to her. I am inundated with graces, overwhelmed with works. FIAT."

Just as she was sending off the first two sisters to Arles, a letter came begging her to regard the demand as annulled, the Marquis de Mandon having died. Accustomed, however, to lean on God rather than look to man for help, and having decided on the

foundation for the sake of souls, this did not make her alter her plans.

The Sisters started, and on the way were received with cordial hospitality by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. But when they reached Arles, they were met with advice not to stay there, but to go on either to Avignon, Pont St. Esprit, or Aix.

The Sister chosen by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia for the work was Sister Mary of St. Joseph Regaudiat, one with courage after her own pattern. Discouragement had no hold upon her. She and her companions remained in Arles, writing home to their Mother several times a week to tell her of all their difficulties and ask her for advice.

There was no house for them, and some people told them they would find neither penitents nor resources. At the palace of the Archbishop of Aix, on whom Arles depends, they were at first coldly received by M. Jaquemet, Vicar General, afterwards Bishop of Nantes; but he was a man of such sound, upright judgment, that he was soon won over by their zeal and their account of their Mother's great works.

Gradually the cause made way in the hearts of the priests of the town and the gentry of the province, and Mme. de Mandon, Mme. de Lézert, Mme. de Ségoyer, and other noble personages vied with the parochial clergy in zeal for the establishment of the foundation. Meanwhile Fathers Barthès and Fouillot were no less devoted.

The Sisters said they were making a copy of their

home, the Mother House. They told Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia they had the same devotions, the same statues in their chapel, and that a lamp and candlesticks, exactly like those at Angers, had been given them. Before many months were over, they were able to tell her that, to their great joy, they had more than forty inmates in the Southern fold of the Good Shepherd.

In later years they built a convent outside the town and altogether in the country, on La Crau Road, near a sanctuary which is very old and very renowned in the religious history of the district. It is popularly called "L'Agenouillade."

In the Middle Ages, whilst some robbers who had pillaged the cathedral stopped here to divide their spoils in the dead of the night, a sacred particle fell from the ciborium. Shortly afterwards a knight riding to Crau reached the same place. His horse stopped and refused to pass over some invisible object, which, upon dismounting, he perceived to be the sacred particle. Returning to Arles, he warned the clergy of his discovery, and in procession they came out to find the Blessed Sacrament. The knight, a rich man, resolved to build a chapel on the spot, in commemoration of the miracle, and from that time down to the present century, Mass was always said there on the first Sunday in May.

The people of Arles were at first struck with astonishment that women should display such activity and spirit as the Sisters did. It puzzled them that

a few poor nuns, destitute of money, resources, or worldly support, should so speedily have won their way to favour, obtained alms, organised a convent, and then have filled it with subjects taken from a race always difficult to govern.

That they should have accomplished so much provoked extraordinary admiration for their Foundress, and the fact of the Order coming from Anjou was a new link in an old connection.

Duke René of Anjou, poet, painter, friend of all the arts, was King of Provence. When he came down the Loire in his ship, adorned with beautiful tapestry representing scenes from the Apocalypse, for the purpose of visiting the people of his southern dominion, he brought to Aix his court of monks and nobles, and, with them, the devotions popular in Anjou. Reversing his course, he brought from the south to Anjou the cultus of St. Mary Magdalen, to whom he dedicated a convent of La Sainte Baume (the convent of La Baumette), already mentioned as part of the view the Sisters of the Good Shepherd see from their monastery.

The secret of the success of the Sisters is explained in a letter from Father Barthès to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia.

"If all your daughters are as submissive, pious, joyful as those I saw at Angers, you will gain all the south."

The following circular, authorised by the Archbishop of Aix, which Mother Pelletier's daughters

addressed to the Catholic people of Provence, is the echo of her own teaching, the declaration of her views, her ideas. To quote it is only to give the programme of these views and of her work.

"Religion brought from heaven the proper remedy to heal every wound. The friend of mankind in its very essence, it borrows the language of its Divine Author, and cries out, 'Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.'

"And, in response to this voice, the sick, the orphan, the unfortunate deprived of the use of reason, the infirm, the old—in one word, all the suffering, seek refuge beneath its sheltering wings. It alone possesses the infallible secret which effectually relieves every ill.

"But there is an evil of another kind, a deep and ever-widening sore, the aspect of which pierces every honest Christian heart with feelings of horror and compassion. This sore is immorality.

"Was it possible that religion should remain insensible to it, its charity shrink from the sight of this contagious leprosy? No! religion, instituted to heal and save souls, has specifics for all moral maladies, even those most desperate, and that this malady should become the special object of its solicitude was to be expected, and has in point of fact been so.

"Multitudes of saints and apostolic men, in all ages, deploring the evil, have tried every means of staying its course, and in latter days the Rev. Father Eudes founded a society of religious for this purpose

Up to the close of the last century this society rendered immense services, but then it was crushed out of existence, since which time the need for the revival of an institution so precious has been felt. Isolated establishments were formed in different towns, and last year the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI., in order to promote the propagation of the work, under the direction of a Superioress General, bestowed upon the house at Angers the title of Mother House, and upon the association brought forth there the sacred name of the Good Shepherd. The benedictions of the common Father of all the faithful, his prayers addressed to heaven, will not remain without fruit. The house at Angers has existed for six years, and has already colonies at Grenoble, Poitiers, Saumur, Metz, Nancy, and Puy.

"To open an asylum for endangered innocence, a Refuge for repentance, such is its twofold object. If any work should stir sympathy and awaken an echo in an unprejudiced soul, to whom religion, morals, and humanity are dear, surely the Good Shepherd ought to do so.

"There are asylums for the restoration of the insane, hospitals for every form of corporal sickness; should there not, upon the same principle of order, and in proportion to the spread of license, also be shelters for the weak, hospitals for the cure of the heart in its irregular inclinations? Conversion is worked only by the banishment of dangerous occasions; the best resolutions may fail in presence of the same dangers

that have occasioned the first fall. What zealous priest, what father of a family, Christian wife, chaste and pious woman would not be ambitious to have a share in the merit of those who build up and maintain a house recommended to general interest by so many titles? To help in the preservation of innocence, to contribute to the purification of the common morality, and to the extirpation of a vice supremely detrimental to society, is, at the same time, to work for the peace and happiness of family life, the salvation of innumerable souls, and for one's personal sanctification.

"And thus, while far from intending to depreciate any useful work, may we not ask if any other was ever nobler or more deserving of generous aid?

"There still may be some prejudiced persons who, regarding the sore we attempt to heal as hopelessly incurable, perceive in the praiseworthy endeavour no likelihood of success. But God forbid that this hopelessness should be shared by Christian souls. Faith and experience combine to assure us of more consoling results. Does not our Lord invite all sinners without distinction to repentance? He, the Good Shepherd, unwearingly pursues the wandering sheep, and brings back some each day to the fold. How many sinful women in all ages, from the Magdalen down to our own day, have become the illustrious conquests of grace, and a source of edification, by the fervour of their repentance?

"But to speak only of the present, have we not

cause for the most legitimate hope? The results obtained by previously founded establishments of the Institute are a safe guarantee for what may be expected from the one now to be erected. In the house at Angers alone, the women and girls admitted during the last six years, and who are there expiating their past sins by the practice of voluntary penance, are to be numbered by hundreds; and, without speaking further of the results obtained in other establishments of the same Institute, how large numerically would be the calculation of similar results obtained in other institutions of the same class?

"Such facts as these, which are both numerous and incontestible, we leave to the consideration of every one of good faith, with the conviction that they are of a nature to encourage charitable efforts."

In this circular, Mother Pelletier's daughters explain the purpose of their vocation with great clearness, the advantages that religion and society derive from it, and the motives thence offered to good men to assist in furthering it.

The Good Shepherd was founded at Arles. The Rome of Gaul, the ancient city of Arles is, in its vicissitudes, the miniature of its great Italian prototype. Arenas, theatres, antique marble statues still bear witness to its former magnificence in days when the world lay under the supreme sway of force and the pomp of glory. Christianity, introduced by St. Trophimus, brought with it the faith that saves, and that

connection of virtues which is the pledge of the future life. Conquerors, whose mighty architectural works were the mute affirmation of their strength, have been succeeded by the peaceful conquests of religion. The great architects of the present day dwell in cloisters; artists, whose beautiful handiwork is animated with life, who form souls in purity and ornament them with the ineffable grace of Christian virtue. Such are the daughters of Mother Pelletier, artists hidden from human gaze, bestowing on the souls entrusted to their care the blessing of peace and the ornament of Divine grace.

Little by little, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia established the devotions in her monastery, which she loved, and those that especially appealed to the various classes of her Community. She loved to honour our Blessed Lady, praying and weeping at the foot of the cross, and hailed with gratitude Mme. d'Andigné's generous proposal to erect, at the end of the convent garden, a Calvary, with statues of the Blessed Virgin and St. John. Whilst it was being constructed and surrounded with a plantation of fine trees, intended to give it becoming retirement, the Mother never failed in her daily visit to inspect the work and note its progress. When it was completed, and surrounded with cedars of Lebanon, she begged Mgr. de Montault to come and bless it. This ceremony took place on the 6th November 1837. The Mother, always keenly alive to the respect due to Divine worship, honoured the occasion with a great solemnity. Monseigneur

accorded forty days' indulgence to all who prayed at the Calvary. It became a favourite place of prayer to the pious Superioress, to which she retired for recollection. She might often be found on her knees in that solitude, recommending the interests of her Community to Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother.

It is noteworthy that the most pious souls have always delighted in uniting themselves to our Blessed Lady at the foot of the Cross, to share her compassion and partake of her supernatural sentiments, and this is because they feel that Mary alone can comprehend and honour worthily the mystery of the Cross, for she alone was capable of offering Her own Son to God for the world's redemption; she alone, with her Son, on Calvary, offered to Him the Holy Victim who was flesh of her flesh.

The whole vast enclosure of her monastery was dear to the Mother's piety, and she decorated it with the Cross of Jesus and statues of His saints. The heavenly peace which she had established there she delighted in, and caused others to do the same. On the 4th October 1838, M. de Neuville wrote to her:—

"The lovely walk yesterday did me no harm. Indeed, you have grace to wile away weariness as well as all the other ills of life. Your gardens raise the soul to Him who created all things. And you, when you are in any trouble, look at those touching creations of Divine Wisdom, and let yourself by that sweet contemplation be transported into a solitude where neither noise of man nor buzzing of hornets is heard.

You have indeed such motives for the purest joy that, like St. Paul, you may, even in your tribulations, be in ecstasy; for, so far as I know, for several centuries no religious institute has spread with such rapidity."

In the eyes of the servants of God the prodigious development of the Good Shepherd seemed due to the courageous perseverance of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who laboured night and day. But it was due rather, in fact, to her unwavering confidence in Providence and the protection of our Blessed Lady. In her own conduct, and in directing that of her daughters, she always practised the counsel of our Divine Lord. She had no solicitude for their future, confiding it to the fatherly goodness of Him who clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the young birds.

"To all who lean only on Him, Providence is kind, sweet, adorable," M. de Neuville wrote to her on the 8th October 1837. "This thought came to me while I was saying my prayers, during which, by way of a distraction not unusual to me, my thoughts went off to the Good Shepherd. I saw the penitents so filled with fervour, so pierced with regret for the sins of their past lives; then the marvellous swarm of religious scattering the odour of their virtues along their path, and I said to myself, 'Truly this is all the fruit of our good Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's disinterestedness, and of her boundless confidence in the goodness of Mary.' It may be that she too has heard a voice saying, 'Where shall we find bread here for all this multitude?' But the Lord asked only that He might

prove her, for He knew what He should do. She was not shaken by it; she opened wide her motherly arms to gather in the unfortunate, to receive many virgins destitute of worldly goods, like their Divine Queen. And everywhere towns open their gates to welcome her generous daughters, and Mary's banner moves from one end of France to the other. What words should such a spectacle draw forth? or what should one do beholding it? Fall on one's knees and worship God."

The impression made on M. de Neuville by the marvellous development of the Good Shepherd in the number of its houses, and by the virtues of the Foundress, was all the more lively from his having known of all the difficulties surmounted. To the world outside the Convent, he acted as a faithful echo, receiving and giving testimony to the reputation for sanctity which Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia enjoyed among her daughters, and which he was peculiarly able to understand.

"I bless God a thousand thousand times," he said, "for all the holy legions of spouses and betrothed of Jesus Christ. If I should ever have the incomprehensible happiness of following the path of perfection, it will be to their touching examples that I shall be for ever indebted. Bravo! for our little French women! They meet trials as Frenchmen meet fire."

Besides profiting by the edifying spectacle of their virtues and their confidence in our Blessed Lady, he used to look upon every letter he received from Mother

Mary of St. Euphrasia as a grace accorded him. They bore to him from the cloister the aroma of words inspired by piety and confidence in God's goodness. "Your letters, filled with unction, bring holy and touching thoughts to my soul, thoughts it greatly needs always. It is just like a dry stony field, producing no fruit except when visited by beneficent rain, like your words. I read with delight your accounts of all the marvels in your foundations and elsewhere."

He knew that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia drew her spiritual strength in those retreats when, withdrawn from her usual daily avocations, she retired to her cell, as to Thabor, to converse with God. "Whilst you are withdrawn to sojourn upon the heights of Thabor, busy with pious colloquies, I desire with my whole heart that you may lay up a good store of provision in health, so that you may long be the terror of Amalec and the consolation of Israel."

She also was fond of talking of the sweetness of solitude, and of the strength to be drawn from it by a pious soul who retires to be with Jesus Christ.

"In retreat," she says, "whether general or private, a careful effort must first be made to find a suitable solitude to dwell in with our Lord alone. Each may choose the place which most pleases her, as, for example, the Desert, Thabor, the Grotto of Gethsemani, the Garden of Olives, Calvary, the Sepulchre, or the Holy Tabernacle, which is the place chosen oftener than any other. This once fixed upon, the soul should make it her abode, the place of her delight; she should

put herself there with our Lord as her companion—see Him, listen to Him, speak to Him."

During the year 1837 Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia found it difficult to resist her fatigues; she had fre-frequent feverish attacks, which somewhat alarmed her daughters and M. de Neuville, but all remarked that her gaiety and energy remained unaffected. The good news she received from her daughters at the various foundations always did more for her than the remedies of physicians.

M. de Neuville multiplied his genius in inventing ways of showing his interest in the Good Shepherd and its Foundress. Scarcely a day passed without his sending his faithful servant Louis for news of the Mother House and foundations. He was always eager for any accounts showing the growth of the work in France. When the Mother's re-election took place, he gave her a picture of St. John the Evangelist, patron of virgins, which he had framed and sent her, saying it was "to remind her that she, like St. John, was the child of the Blessed Virgin."

CHAPTER XIX

JOURNEY TO ROME, 1838

Foundation at Rome—The Rev. Father Rosaven—Cardinal Odeschalchi—Letter from the Cardinal—Mother Pelletier's journey to Rome—Stages to Saumur, Bourges, Puy, Lyons, Arles—Occupation on the road—Marseilles—Civita Vecchia—Rome.

EVER since the erection of the Generalat, one of Mother Pelletier's strongest desires had been to establish a house of her Order in Rome, near the Cardinal Protector, and under the eye of the Holy Father.

This, she felt, would both be a means of giving yet more convincing proof of her attachment to the Holy See, and of special participation in the benedictions of the holy martyrs of the capital of the Christian world. Father Vaures approved of her design, and furthered it by addressing a petition to the Holy Father, setting before his Holiness the good to be derived from the Institute, and pointing out that the poor female prisoners of the town could be placed under the tuition and superintendence of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's daughters. He also laid stress on the facilities for bringing them to Rome, and spoke of the Generalat and the great fruits

produced by it, now confessed by those originally most opposed to it.

Meantime Cardinal Odescalchi, on his part, pleaded the same cause before the Pope, who granted him plenary powers to bring religious of the Good Shepherd to Rome, and there instal them.

Some delay, however, occurred in carrying out the plan, for cholera was raging in the city. By Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's orders, the prayers of the Community were offered for its cessation and the Holy Father's safety. She also authorised penances for the same intentions, but these were stopped, at the instigation of Cardinal Odescalchi, who wrote, telling her to beg her daughters to husband all their strength for the service of religion, adding that there was austerity enough in their life, however much lightened by the grace of vocation and rule.

On the 12th of October 1837, Father Rosaven, S.J., wrote to her, and told her that her daughters would do the greatest good in Rome, and were much desired there; he also said that, with regard to himself, he placed himself altogether at their service for the greater glory of God. Finally, Cardinal Odescalchi wrote, announcing to the good Superioress that her daughters might come in the month of May, that they would find quarters prepared for themselves and the penitents, and that, regarding everything else they might think useful to their work, he would be there to help them.

No news could have been more agreeable to the

Superioress General. In order to have duly prepared subjects, she multiplied her instructions, teaching her daughters not only to love their rules, but showing them the spirit in which they were to be kept in all their purity. Copies of the explanation of the Rule were made by her orders, and the sisters destined for the Roman foundation were set to work to learn Italian with increased application.

In short, she inspired every professed and novice, of whom there were 130 in the house, with fresh impulses of fervour and regularity, to prove to God their gratitude to Him for what she looked upon as an extraordinary favour.

The honour of the whole Congregation might, she said, not improbably depend on the success of this foundation, where the work of salvation would be carried on under the eye of the Pope and Cardinal Protector.

The intention entertained at Rome of summoning her daughters there, had been first broached to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia in 1835. On the 3rd of June in that year, writing to the Superioress at Grenoble, she says, "We have had a confidential letter from Rome, from which we learn that one of our protectors, shortly about to visit France, will come to our dear Mother House and pour out upon it afresh the benedictions of the Holy Father. Just think what a consolation this is in the midst of our tears! I can hide nothing from you, my daughter, and you had better tell our beloved Sisters that these worthy

Roman dignitaries intend to found one of our houses in the Holy City, in the vicinity of the Holy Father, so that the Generalat may be protected at every point. Pray, I beseech you, and let us do everything we can for the perfecting of these admirable plans."

A month later she wrote again to the same religious, "We have just had a very sweet consolation for the Order. A priest from Rome paid us a visit, and spoke to us from the Pope. He handed over to us a document signed by the hand of His Holiness, which will add greatly to our strength. He talked to us also of the dear foundation of Rome. This is still his secret, but almost settled for the feast of All Saints. Oh, what graces! We are confused in God's holy presence. In a fortnight this good father returns to Angers for a clothing; he will preside over it, and then he goes back immediately to Rome, where his duties bring him very near to the Pope's person, whom he sees once or twice daily. When we meet, I shall have most consoling things to tell you."

At Rome, meantime, the protectors of the Good Shepherd were occupied both with the Generalat and the foundation, and both these events overjoyed Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. On the 28th of May 1836, she wrote to Mother Mary St. John of the Cross, "I am hoping for your postulants; we have none now. But the harvest is great and Mary will send labourers: she loves the field. How am I to give you some idea of the progress of the work, my

beloved daughters? Who could describe all? I am weighed down with the load of Divine mercies we have received. Yes, Rome is always doing more and more for us, coming nearer to us; Rome gives us light, strength, and assistance."

Cardinal Odescalchi himself wrote to her, "Come, my dear daughter, and bring several of your religious to take possession of the house allotted to you. Fly to assist those poor souls who groan beneath an iron yoke, and have so long needed your maternal care. Come also to be my heart's consolation. It is my wish to receive you myself at the monastery which I have had prepared for you, according to your rules and constitutions. Come then, my dear daughters, and fear no obstacles; fear sin only; come and destroy the empire of sin by letting the ardour of your zeal have its sway. Oh! how great is the mission reserved for you in Italy. Arm yourselves with courage. God is on your side, who shall be against you?"

The Cardinal had now told Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to come herself to Rome to plant an offshoot of her Order. This she regarded in the light of a peculiar grace. It gave her the greatest joy to be thus called to establish her daughters in Rome, receive the blessing of the Pope (to whom the Institute already owed so much), kneel at the tombs of the martyrs, inhale the air of the capital of the Christian world, impregnated with the health-giving virtue of the martyrs, and every element of heroic devotion to Jesus Christ and His Church.

She assembled a Chapter, held with more than the usual solemnity, to nominate the Sisters who should accompany her. Sister Mary of St. Teresa of Jesus de Couëspel was one of the first to be named. Mme. d'Andigné begged to be allowed to be of the company in spite of her seventy-five years, with the stipulation that she should defray all expenses of the journey. M. de Neuville wrote to the good Mother upon the occasion. "Madame, like another Hannibal you are preparing to enter Italy, but not like him to enrich yourself with gold: you go to seek nothing but neglected souls. May our Blessed Lady bless your peaceful conquests. I hope she may support your daughters amongst a people good, devoted, but very poor."

We have spoken of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's delight in letting her friends share her joys; and, with Rome in perspective, she felt the necessity of imparting her spiritual happiness to her usual confidantes.

The following letter was written to Mother Mary of St. Philip Mercier, Superioress at Sens:—

"From our Monastery at Angers,
March 26th, 1838.

"'My God! come to my assistance!'

"Your sufferings grieve me, my beloved daughter; and believe me, if I knew how to give you relief, I would do it. Tell us, my dear daughter, I beseech you, what there is that would do you good. Do take

care of yourself, if not for your own sake, at least for ours.

"Alas! no, I cannot be at Sens for the beautiful ceremony of the Good Shepherd. You will ask, Why not? Well, my daughter, I am going to talk to you heart to heart. In spite of my unworthiness, my littleness, the Lord deigns to use this vilest instrument for the accomplishment of His adorable designs. We are all struck with admiration and love. The great news has come. Rome! All is settled! I have been summoned to the Holy City, and am to stay a month there, to arrange the affairs of our Holy Order.

"Good kind Mme. d'Andigné takes us there, in spite of her great age. Oh! what a heroic act it is, and what devotedness! She is indeed a true friend.

"The Chapter gives the whole Institute all the details; it is most consoling. The letters will reach you in about a week.

"Our consolations in God are very great, and all the more solid because preceded by heavy crosses.

"The Divine Shepherd has wiped away our tears. Blessed be His Holy Name!

"Oh, my good dear Mary of St. Philip, sincere intimate friend of my soul, you who have shared all my labours, you told me all these things would happen, and I was far from believing they would. Now, if it be the will of God, I will go to you later on for a rest, shall I not?

"It is arranged that we start on Easter Tuesday: sailing from Marseilles, we shall be in Rome a month. I shall return by Paris, for Mme. d'Andigné has business there, and while she stays there I will visit the dear tribe at Sens. I cannot write about all this to you without shedding tears."

A fortnight later she wrote the following letter to the Superioress at Nancy:

"FROM OUR MONASTERY AT ANGERS,
April 13th, 1838.

"We have nothing else to recommend to you, my beloved daughters, but mutual dilection towards one another, with the holy peace of our Lord.

"Where are you, my great Sister St. John of the Cross, and all our dear sisters? The nearer the time of our departure comes, the more does my affection for you increase. Ah, our inmost being is stirred at the thought of being permitted to go and establish ourselves in the very heart of the Church! Think of it, my dearest Sister, the humble daughter of Our Lady of Charity, in the capital of the whole Christian world. We are about to lay all our tribes at the feet of the Supreme Head of the Church. All the glory be to Jesus and Mary. But what mercies! Are not these the beautiful days of our Institute—its springtide, its glory? Oh, dear and blessed tribes of Israel, with what delight we go to lay you at his feet who is your holy Deliverer. But in the midst of all this delight, how many cares, tears, and separations! Our Roman

sisters are admirable. I believe the good God has clothed them with His love and grace. They have wept much, but they behave as true religious. You will rejoice, my daughter, if you see our Sion again. A great crowd of fervent souls is to be seen, poor children. They look at each other, their eyes moist with tears, but encourage one another, teach one another, and descry from afar God's great designs. Then, too, subjects are arriving, the foundations increasing, and among them yours is always dearer than life to us. We are going to start on Tuesday morning very early, to avoid a great many troubles which must always attend such a departure.

"Farewell, my dear daughters! May Jesus and Mary bless you! But pray for me that my many sins may be pardoned, and that they may not be a hindrance to the work of grace. You will hardly believe it when I tell you, my dear daughter, that Mgr. de Janson is so extremely kind as to take us as far as Marseilles. We intend to beg him to come all the way to Rome."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia offered her services to the Superior of the Jesuit fathers at Laval to do any commissions for them in Rome. Father Debrosse had just built a sanctuary, dedicated to St. Joseph, at the gate of the town of Laval, near the Abbey Port du Salut, and, availing himself of her offer, he begged her to present a petition to the Pope to obtain special graces for all who visited it. She readily accepted the commission, than which none could have been

more congenial to her piety, for her devotion to St. Joseph and the Holy Family was peculiarly tender.

On Easter Tuesday, 18th April 1838, the Superioress General set out on the journey, accompanied by five religious and Mme. d'Andigné. She left very early in the morning to escape the emotion of those farewells, which would have been so much the more trying, from the fact of her leaving several of her daughters very ill. The first day's journey was very hard and painful to her. She was taken seriously ill, and her daughters were obliged to make her halt at the house of the Curé of St. Clément de Levées, about three leagues from Saumur. She appeared so ill that her companions were alarmed, but they promised the Blessed Virgin that, if she would help them and let them go on their way to the Holy City, they would say the Office of the Immaculate Conception for three years. The prayer was heard almost as soon as uttered, and the Mother grew better and was able to continue her journey. That evening she stopped at her convent of St. Florent de Saumur, where she spent the night. Next day she reached Tours, staying with her old friend and teacher, Mme. de Lignac, to whom she gave an account of the marvellous development of the Good Shepherd from the very foundation; and the two pious friends united in thanking God and praising Him for all the good He had vouchsafed to do through their means.

Another stage was Bourges, where the Mother visited the Bishop, Mgr. de Villèle, and promised him

subjects for a foundation he wished to have in his episcopal city.

At Puy, again, she stayed with her own daughters, and had the happiness of finding them with seventy-five penitents under their direction. She remained there five days, visiting Mgr. de Bonald, the administrator and protector of the Good Shepherd. She had been preceded by a reputation of great benevolence to the poor; and, when it was known in the town that she was visiting a church or passing through the streets, she was thronged by the crowd anxious to see "*the Saint who did so much good everywhere.*"

On the 3rd May she wrote: "I have just come from Puy; it is a beautiful work; Mgr. de Bonald is really a father to us. The holy Bishop of Belley is asking us to come to his diocese, but I could not go there. I had too much to get through here. And now a lady has come from Chambéry about a foundation there: she intends to endow it largely as foundress. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to Joseph and Mary."

From Puy, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia went on to Clermont, to visit a house founded there four months before. It was a foundation that, owing to exterior difficulties, independent of the Convent, was obliged to be discontinued. It existed only for two years.

At a distance of six leagues from Clermont is the little town of Billom, where the holy Bishop of

Bardstown, Mgr. Flaget, was recruiting his health in the pure air of his native mountains. Formerly he had been loved and known by his fellow-countrymen as little Benedict in the village of Contournat; and now, invested with the sacred dignity of the episcopate, they revered him as a saint. As Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's route lay near Billom, she naturally seized the opportunity offered for paying him a visit, passing through the rich valleys of the Auvergne, so beautiful that we cannot doubt that a mind endowed as hers was with the love of nature, was lifted up to Him who created those beauteous scenes. The imagination may readily form an idea of the conversations which took place between those two apostles, both consumed with thirst for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the Mother having come that she might receive the pious fortifying counsel of the man of God, rich in apostolic experience, which lent a singular weight to all his utterances.

After this delay, which was prompted by piety and gratitude, the journey was continued to Lyons over the mountains of Auvergne. One hardly likes to withdraw one's thoughts from the course those holy women took as they made their way through France, bearing spiritual assistance to their sisters, entering into future engagements where their help was required, and bending their steps meanwhile in the direction of Rome, the definite object of their pilgrimage. One would enjoy listening to their spiritual

colloquies as, in succession, their gaze falls upon the beauties of nature or the monuments of man's handiwork, and their hearts and voices are full of the praises of God.

After leaving the rich vale of the Loire, our travellers' route lay through the vast silent plains of Berry, where stands out in bold relief the town and cathedral of Bourges, a beautiful Gothic edifice, a masterpiece of Christian art in the ages of faith; through Auvergne, with its rugged scenery, high mountains, and extinct volcanoes; Lyons, the city of broad river and beautiful hills, rich in saintly memorials; then along the course of the mighty Rhône, bordered with ancient cities, great hostelries, built up, as it were, for the convenience of travellers ascending and descending the river.

At Lyons, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's hostess was Mlle. Jaricot, the devout foundress of the living Rosary and the Propagation of the Faith. Thus was it providentially arranged by God for Mother Pelletier that she should be brought into relation with others resembling herself in zeal for God's glory and love of souls.

She continued her work, labouring for its extension and for the conversion of sinners during her journey. There seems to have been no single day in which she did not do something for the progress of the Good Shepherd. Whilst at Lyons she sent two of the religious accompanying her to Bourg, to find out if it would be possible to profit by the proposals coming

from certain pious ladies there, to found a convent somewhere in the neighbourhood. It so happened that these two nuns missed the coach, and were consequently detained two days at Mâcon, at the hospice of the Sisters of Providence. This accident they thought providential, for the good sisters of the hospice, learning from them the end of the Order of the Good Shepherd, brought some ladies of the town to see them who were hoping to found a home for penitent women. The daughters of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia of course gave all requisite information to these ladies, and in 1839 a foundation was made at Mâcon, that of Bourg in 1838.

The Superioress General went from Lyons to Arles, where she found her daughters living in a small hired house, without court or garden, and with no space for fresh air and exercise but a terrace. Here she received a letter from M. de Neuville, describing the melancholy condition of the Mother House now she was no longer in the midst of her family to cheer all with her joyous spirit. But, nevertheless, he was rejoicing in the knowledge that she was on the way to introduce a new Order into Rome, and one raised up by God to meet the necessities of modern society.

"Angels watch you and applaud," he wrote to her. "The souls of the blessed, especially those who owe their felicity to you, oh! how attentive they are! Yes, Madame, you move surrounded by invisible witnesses, who count your steps, and thrill with holy joy."

The Mother's journey from convent to convent resolved itself into a series of business transactions connected with the Good Shepherd: there was no pause in her constant labours for the salvation of souls.

"How admirable are our sisters at Arles!" she wrote to Angers. "I really do not know how they have existed in this sepulchre of a place."

She arranged with Mme. de Mandon for the acquisition of that lady's house, and on the 4th July following the religious went to it.

This fact was the accomplishment of the first half of a speech of Father Barthès to Mme. de Mandon, at a time when she was in the heyday of youth and prosperity.

"Your house will some day be a monastery, and you a religious."[1]

There were twenty penitents in the poor little house at Arles when the servant of God arrived to visit her daughters, and she came away rejoicing to leave them a better and more healthy home. Like St. Francis of Sales when he acquired the first house for the Visitation, she might have said, "Never was I happier than now that I have found a hive for my poor bees."

Writing from Grenoble to Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia says: "This is the Avila of which St. Teresa speaks. Our Sisters are so holy. What

[1] Mme. de Mandon was afterwards Superioress of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Montpellier.

regularity and union here reign! The dew of heaven falls on their monastery abundantly, because the children console their mother. It is also beautifully situated. It is a *château* standing on a mountain, with an extensive view. Monseigneur comes kindly and without ceremony once a month to see our Sisters, just as good Father de Neuville does at Angers."

All along her route, ever since leaving Angers, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in convents and the homes of pious seculars, had practically experienced the sweetness of Christian hospitality; and indeed to be received and entertained by brethren everywhere, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, is most sweet.

She had always formed her own daughters in this holy virtue. The following passage occurs in one of her instructions:—

"Above all, be charitable to any of our sisters who are travelling. Receive them with the utmost cordiality. Listen to St. Paul, when he teaches the faithful in the early ages of the Church how to practise fraternal hospitality: 'And I commend to you Phebe, our sister, who is in the ministry of the Church that is in Corinth, that you receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that you assist her in whatsoever business she shall have need of you, for she also hath assisted many and myself also.'

"The same Apostle, writing again to the Corinthians, says to them: 'And I beseech you, brethren,

that you also be subject to such and to every one that worketh with us and laboureth.'

"And again he says, 'For they have refreshed both my spirit and yours.'

"And truly, my daughters, you also console my heart when I see you receive our Sisters so well.

"'Using hospitality one towards another.' These words are meant for you, for charity is the essence of our vocation.

"We may well say that the Mother House is like that of an affectionate grandmother, where all the children and grandchildren who come for a visit are received with gentle caresses. When our Sisters arrive here, we ought to extend our solicitude for them to the minutest details—we should see that they rest, have all they need to strengthen them; their clothes ought to be washed, we should make their visit pleasant, and treat them very sweetly, humbly, and charitably.

"Be very frank with them too, for they rejoice in coming here, let them see that the pleasure is mutual. We must so conduct ourselves towards them that that which is written in the Holy Scriptures may be said of us: 'They had but one heart and one soul: neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but all things were common unto them.'

"It is said of the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon that they retain something of the spirit of the patriarchs of old. When they have to deal with

travellers, they treat them with such regard, especially priests and religious, that it is impossible to describe the respect they show or the attention they lavish on them. Among other things, they make abundant offerings of perfumes, fresh milk, the best fruit, the sweetest cream, the finest cheese, the most highly flavoured fruit. They kiss their hands, assemble their families and children to greet them, and beg for a blessing. They look upon it as an honour to help them to mount their horses; they touch their garments with reverence; and, as the travellers disappear, follow them with watchful eyes, kind farewells, and good wishes.

"Let it not be said, my dear daughters, that the inhabitants of Lebanon surpass you or do better than you in the practice of brotherly charity.

"Abbot Apollo, who was Superior of several Convents in the Thebaïd, used often to tell his monks it was their duty to receive the brothers who visited them with respect and reverence. And I always read, with renewed pleasure, what is told of St. Antony upon this subject. Perceiving himself to be liable to frequent visits from his disciples, this great Saint, with the intention of being better able to give them some refreshment, set to work to cultivate a few vegetables and garner fruits. Their visits were treated as occasions of festival, and his sons always went away, not only satisfied themselves, but leaving him happy in having afforded them comfort and recreation."

"Thus do the Saints act. Let us learn from their example to do in like manner."

The two religious who had not accompanied Mother Pelletier in her later visits rejoined her at Marseilles to her great joy. Whilst there, though their time was short, they all had the consolation of going to confession and Communion.

On the 1st of June they embarked for Italy on a steamboat which ran to the Levant, and having on board Greeks, Turks, and Egyptians. The sky was fair and the sea calm, but the Mother and Mme. d'Andigné suffered greatly, nevertheless, from sea-sickness. Still the servant of God, courageous in spite of her discomfort, satisfied her daughters in their eager desire for her relief, by repeatedly saying to them, "My dear daughters, it is well worth this little suffering to have the happiness of going to Rome to visit the tomb of the Apostles and approach the Holy Father."

The steamer arrived at the harbour of Leghorn early enough, on the Vigil of Pentecost, for the religious to assist at Holy Mass. The voyage was continued to Cività Vecchia, where, by previous arrangement, they expected Father Vaures to meet them. He was not there however, and, deprived of his protection, the party had great difficulty in obtaining a carriage for the drive to Rome—a distance of eighteen leagues —and were asked exorbitant prices. At last, however, one was found, and they started at 11 A.M.

When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia became aware

that she was drawing near the Holy City, she alighted from her carriage, prayed fervently, and kissed the soil hallowed by the blood of martyrs. It was the 4th of June, and ten o'clock at night, when the party arrived, on foot, out of respect for the sacred soil, and just as the city gates were on the point of being closed. The guard of soldiers stationed at the custom-house, seeing a party of seeming religious arrive at so late an hour, took them for disguised spies, and received them with insults. Mother Mary of St Euphrasia produced her passport, but they were not convinced, and insisted that some of their men should get into the carriage with the religious and accompany them to their destination.

This was not the last of their difficulties. They asked where they could go for the night, and were given the address of St. Martha's Convent; but when they got there, the woman acting as portress could not understand what they said and shut the door on them.

They were now utterly at a loss, and to complete their difficulties, the coachman, tired of driving them from house to house about the streets, stopped in the Piazza dellà Gesù and told them to get out of the carriage, then mounted his box and drove off, leaving them to their fate. By this time it was midnight. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia accosted a belated passer-by and asked where the Jesuits lived. He pointed out the house, and she sent two of the religious to it. Here they knocked for a quarter of an

hour before the Brother-porter appeared at the wicket. At their request he went for Father Rosaven, who came down to receive them, and provided them with the address of an hotel conducted on the French system, where at last they found a place of repose.

CHAPTER XX

VISIT TO ROME

1838

St. Peter's—Visit to Cardinal Odescalchi—La Scaletta — First Roman penitents—Audience with the Pope—Kindness shown by Gregory XVI. to Mother Pelletier—St. John Lateran—The Scala Santa—Coliseum—Catacombs—Return to France.

NEXT morning Father Vaures, learning that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her companions were in Rome, came to offer his excuses for the treatment they had suffered at the city gates. He also announced their arrival to Cardinal Odescalchi, who sent two of his carriages with liveried servants to take them to St. Peter's, at eleven o'clock, to receive the Pope's blessing.

As Gregory XVI. passed near the religious, Father Vaures told him who they were, and, pointing out Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, reminded him of her name. The Pope stretched out his hand and blessed her.

The sight of the Representative of Jesus Christ, and of the great Basilica, greatly moved Mother Pelletier and her little band. The vast proportions of St. Peter's, the exquisite harmony of line, the wealth of mosaic, the tombs, the altars made an

impression upon them utterly different from that produced by the Gothic monuments of their native land. Here they felt all the greater beauty to be reserved for the interior, and that it would require a frequent repetition of visits to form any adequate idea of the riches and beauties accumulated in this great masterpiece of architecture. "We should have wanted whole days to visit it in detail," they wrote, "and even then should have had only an imperfect knowledge."

As acquaintance with St. Peter's increases, the perfection, the finished skill of its beauty, astonish one more every day, just as the masterpieces of Bossuet seem more beautiful, more wonderful each time they are read. In contrast to this, the powers of admiration and amazement are so exhaustively excited upon a first visit to the Gothic Cathedral of Milan, that the next visit can produce no effect but that of reducing the first emotion; as with the romantic works of Chateaubriand, they dazzle one at first and leave no emotion when read again.

After St. Peter's, Father Vaures took the religious to Cardinal Odescalchi, and acted as their interpreter. The Cardinal received them in his study with high-bred courtesy and the gentle grace of a holy religious. He offered excuses for their disagreeable reception at the city gates, and said God had sent them to Rome for the relief of his conscience, and to help him in the fulfilment of his ministry. He explained to them that, having to judge those penitents brought to him by their parents, he was tortured in consigning them

to prison by the idea of the danger incurred to their souls. In this great spiritual anxiety he looked for relief to the Good Shepherd. He talked also to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia of her earlier letters, pointing out to her God's guidance in everything connected with the Generalat. "For," said he, "why did you address yourself to me without knowing I was judge of the penitents? Why did the Holy Father charge me with all your affairs? Why did he appoint me, without any knowledge of mine, to be your Protector? Why did your Bishop view the appointment with pleasure? Many similar coincidences prove that it was God's will, and that this work of the Generalat is His."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, moved by his words, wrote to Angers:

"Rome, *June 9th*, 1838.

"'The arm of the Lord has supported us.'

"Why are you not all here, beloved Sisters? Never has anything been known like the graces the Lord grants us. Our Blessed Lady has led us to this place, sanctified by the blood of so many martyrs, that we also may here become martyrs by the great labours attached to our fourth vow. Our holy Protector came yesterday, and I had at least an hour's talk with his Eminence. During the conversation, I received so many graces and lights that I regard the day as one of the most precious in my poor life. 'When you chose me for your Protector,' he said to me, 'you did not know that I was Grand Judge of penitents. It

is forbidden here that a girl, or still more a married woman, should frequent houses of ill-fame; and if they are seen doing so, the father or husband has the right to bring them to me, and I sentence them to a longer or shorter term of detention. You may imagine my distress when obliged to send them to houses almost more dangerous than those they leave. But now that I am to have my daughters of the Good Shepherd, I shall no longer have such anxiety. It is the greatest relief to me. Oh yes! The affection I feel for you is truly paternal, and it is quite time that I should fulfil towards you the obligations of a protector, which are so closely connected with those of a father. It is my wish that you should depend only on me. We will first of all take measures for the dismissal of the present staff. I am going to hand the keys over to you, so that you may have greater liberty in the exercise of your functions, and in doing the great good here awaiting you. I will support you in everything. The penitents are so numerous that one house will not suffice; we shall need others later; but first let us establish this one thoroughly.'"

That he might begin the use of his powers with a gracious act, Cardinal Odescalchi gave permission to the religious to visit any of the basilicas or other holy places they chose, and charged Father Vaures to go with them. The private audience he kindly gave Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia the day after her arrival was repeated twice a week all the time

she was in Rome, for the purpose of establishing the foundation, and still more to regulate the affairs of the Institute. In Cardinal Odescalchi, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had found the wise protector she had asked God to send her, and whom she had seen while in prayer. She had great difficulty in overcoming her emotion the first time she met him. From henceforth the Cardinal was protector and father to the Good Shepherd.

After the first visit to his Eminence, the religious received the parish priests of Rome, who conducted them to the house which was to be the scene of their labours. It was situated in the Trastevere quarter, in the Via Longara, and was known as the Monastery of La Scaletta. It had formerly belonged to an order of religious penitents. The exterior was gloomy and looked like a prison, but inside it was pleasant and produced a different impression. There was a chapel with a tribune, a choir shut off by a grate, thirty cells opening on a wide corridor, a large refectory, a good-sized garden, fountains of water, and altogether it was promising, and appeared to the religious easy to transform into a place of prayer and work. They found there those happy arrangements of which the builders of old Italian and Egyptian monasteries had the secret, and by which they combined plain exteriors with interior arrangements so admirably adapted to peace and prayer, that religious were naturally drawn to the holy exercises of their state.

They soon perceived some of the difficulties attending their future mission. There were twelve penitents under the direction of a woman, herself an old penitent, for whom it was impossible for them to have any respect. The girls were ignorant and lazy, and spent their time in sleep or in walking about, without enough energy even to sweep the house or keep it clean; it was in a state of repulsive disorder. As for their religion, it consisted of a few superstitious practices.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia set to work to win their confidence by methods she had often used in other cases. She surrounded them with small kindnesses, and gave them a better dinner than usual, in honour of the arrival of the religious.

They highly appreciated this attention. On the whole they were a good-hearted set. One of them who had failed in respect to a Sister, for instance, came afterwards, and throwing herself at her feet, asked her pardon. Gradually the religious got them to work, first setting the example by working themselves. Very soon dirt and disorder, which have an indescribable affinity to the kingdom of Satan, gave place to the cleanliness and order which are the proper ornaments of God's house. Even the furniture in a community, in its seemly arrangement, the cells, in their shining neatness, catch some reflection of the beauty which adorns religious souls. Cleanliness and order are themselves semi-virtues, signs of well-ordered souls.

In a few days, word came, through Father Vaures, that the Pope would give an audience to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her daughters. Mother Pelletier's heart beat fast as she mounted the broad staircase at the Vatican. She prayed fervently when she reached the Pope's ante-chamber, and rehearsed the ceremonies of Pontifical receptions. Cardinal Odescalchi was with the nuns, and presented them to His Holiness. "This is my Good Shepherd," said Gregory XVI.: "Come, Reverend Mother: Come, my dear daughters." Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her companions then kissed the Pope's foot respectfully, after which he made them sit down, and talked in a fatherly manner of the end of their Institute and of the difficulties they had met with—of the good they had done already, and of the still greater which remained for them to do by multiplying their foundations. He also promised that he would always be their Protector, and assured them that they should have absolute control of their House in Rome, and that there should be no interference on the part of outside administrators. Then he recommended them to the kindness and devotedness of Cardinal Odescalchi, who was, meantime, greatly rejoicing in this kind reception. The Pope was delighted with their enthusiasm, and pleased with their beautiful white habit, which reminded him of the Camaldolese. He was touched, too, by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's frank explanations, open manner, and evident holiness: she kept her hands clasped all the

time. At the close of the audience, the Pope said to Cardinal Odescalchi, "I do believe the good Mother really took me for the good God."

And in truth all the time the audience lasted, and she conversed with the Representative of Christ about her work and mission, and the good souls were to derive from them, she was lifted utterly above earthly things, and was in an ecstasy of delight with the kindness and amiable simplicity of Gregory XVI. While descending the stairs, she said to her daughters, "Oh, how fortunate you are, my dear Sisters, in having come to live in Rome so near the Sovereign Pontiff."

Her ardent love for Rome was such that she understood that, from primacy of the Pope came to Communities, as to the universal Church, rules of conduct inspired by the Spirit of God—rules which can never mislead, and which cause the virtues of religion to grow and flourish.

In the august person of Gregory XVI., she saw the Divine power which Jesus Christ gave to Peter, to feed His sheep and lambs with the wholesome food which nourishes the supernatural life.

"On that day," she says, "our Congregation was planted deeper in the bosom of the Catholic Church."

Like Cardinal Odescalchi, Gregory XVI. advised Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia to visit the basilicas and other beautiful Roman monuments during her stay. She was happy to obey, and to let her

companions see the marvels of Rome, before their enclosure was established.

On the 29th of June the little party assisted at the Pontifical office in St. Peter's for the feast of the Holy Apostles. The pomp and majesty of the ceremonies readily awoke Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's enthusiasm. The Pope, on his *Sedia*, his eyes bathed with tears, his body inclined forwards, carrying the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament, preceded by a long procession of monks, prelates, and Cardinals, appeared to her like some vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem. She loved the beauty of Divine worship, the glory of ceremonies, the decoration of God's temples, and this spectacle awoke in her an ecstasy of delight. That same evening she wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers: "We have seen St. Peter's and its ceremonies—it was like heaven; day and night a hundred lamps burn near the tomb of the Head of the Church; every statue is worth more than 100,000 francs, and they are innumerable."

St. John Lateran made as deep an impression upon her, but not of the same kind. Her tender piety towards the life of our Lord was stirred to the depths when she saw and venerated the relics contained in the basilica. With what intensity of devotion she pressed her lips to the Holy Table on which the Divine Eucharist was first instituted! With what emotion she kissed the curb of Jacob's Well, where our Lord talked to the Samaritan woman and called her from the life of sin to the life of grace, beseeching Him

meanwhile to make her words efficacious to win the hearts of the penitents who came to draw water at the fountain of the Good Shepherd.

Near St. John Lateran is the Scala Santa, the staircase from Pilate's palace, which Jesus descended after being condemned to death, and exposed to the gaze of the Jews. Generations of the faithful have followed one another, mounting these steps on their knees, in adoring compassion with the Divine Passion of our Lord. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia practised this pious devotion, and ascended the staircase on her knees, kissing each one of the twenty-eight steps of which it consists, with a heart wrung with grief for the sins of all mankind, and especially for the offences of her penitents.

The Mamertime Prison was another place of pious pilgrimage to her, she went down to the lowest dungeon (now transformed into a chapel), where the Prince of the Apostles was confined, and she drank with devotion of the miraculous fountain it contains.

This dark dungeon, where he was once imprisoned who was to bring the Divine light of the Gospel to Rome and the whole world, brought home to her the contrast between temporal poverty and spiritual riches. Out of this dungeon he came who was the first infallible teacher of the Catholic world. Out of poverty and nothingness come the holy founders of religious orders, who continue part of the mission of St. Peter by carrying the light of the Gospel through

the world, and sowing the good seed of the truth in souls.

A little while before departing from Rome, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote to Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross, Superioress at Nancy:

"From our Monastery at Rome,
June 26th, 1838.

"'At *Rome* I will be favourable to thee.'

"My dearest daughter, how often I think of those words of St. Ignatius when I see all the wonderful things our Lord does for our holy Congregation. M. Marguet was really guided by the Divine Spirit when he first told you to go to Italy. We are now in the Holy City, and have found the true light for the work of the Good Shepherd here, at the sacred feet of him who is the Head of the Church, and in the fatherly heart of our holy Protector. Here only does one understand the full extent of our Divine mission; here only have I been able to make a full explanation of my thoughts. And what Divine consolation has been poured into my soul! At Rome it has found light and strength. The work has taken fresh life. Oh, if I could only tell you, heart to heart, what I feel, give you an account of our holy Protector, who is the angelic Founder and Guardian of our Sion! How holy he is! And twice a week his Eminence deigns to grant us audiences. He directs the work, sees its full extent. He is ready now to give us two houses in *Rome*. I have

only four days left, my very dear daughters, and in this short time everything must be definitely settled —just imagine what I have to do! But at *Rome* it is all easy, all sweet. Ah, pray for me that so much grace here may fortify me for crosses in France.

"How is our beloved flock at Nancy? Oh, rest assured that, by the grace of God, unworthy as I am, I shall pay it a visit next October. I made this resolution at the sacred feet of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, to whom we prayed very much for you, my dearly beloved daughters. You were present to my thoughts at every sacred place we had the happiness of visiting. Beautiful Rome, holy Rome, journey a thousand times blessed, never shall I forget you!

"Write to us at Angers, my daughter; tell us of your crosses and consolations, what progress this dear house, the object of your labours, is making. Write to our Roman Sisters, too: they are very deeply attached to you. I know what their martyrdom is. When our poor Mary of the Good Shepherd speaks of her sisters in France, or thinks of them, she is full of sorrow, although all the time admiring the great graces of our Sion. She is writing to you, and I must leave you to go to our great Italian missions.

"Farewell, my beloved daughters. God knows what you are to me."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia did not fail, before leaving Rome, to make a pilgrimage to the rooms of

St. Aloysuis and St. Stanislaus Kostka. Her attraction to these amiable patrons of Catholic youth was the greater, because she had already received much help from the fathers of the Society of Jesus, and counted on still further aid from them in extending and in developing the foundations.

At Santa Maria Maggiore, she venerated the sacred Crib of the Infant Saviour; at St. Peter's in Montorio, the place of St. Peter's martyrdom. She visited the Coliseum, the Catacombs—in fact, every spot consecrated by the blood of martyrs, or the presence of Saints honoured by the Church. Her piety was so fervent, her faith so ardent, that she made a pilgrimage every day, and Rome was to her indeed the Holy City, fairer and richer than any other.

She also visited certain communities which had accorded a fraternal welcome to the Good Shepherd, that of the Sacred Heart, at the Trinità dei Monti in particular, where she was received as a religious with a daily growing reputation for sanctity by the two Superioresses, Mme. de Causans, Mistress of Novices, and Mme. de Limminghe, Mistress of the School, who surrounded her with attentions. The Superioress asked her to address a few edifying words to the pupils, which, after saying she was both ignorant and inexperienced, she consented to do.

The audience was composed of little girls mostly belonging to distinguished families, one of whom, Mme. Constance Bonaparté, in after days gave the following account to Mme. Kennee, who had been her

pupil at the Sacred Heart, and became a religious of the Good Shepherd:—

"When our Superioress begged the Mother General, who was visiting the school, to address the pupils, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia begged to be excused on the ground of her incapacity, saying those she was accustomed to address were only poor orphans, or persons who had grievously offended God. But when she related such touching instances of conversions the girls were all delighted."

We have said before that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was naturally eloquent. Her fine imagination was richly stocked with pictures of celestial beauty, and she had a more than common capacity for receiving those impressions which religion makes on every pious soul. Sin in others caused her great pain: conversions moved her intensely. Impressions such as these, however often repeated, lost nothing of their original force; and when she spoke of any of the many conversions in which she had either taken part or witnessed, the peculiar charm of her manner was the outcome of these vivid impressions.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia always remembered the Trinità dei Monti with deep edification. We find these words in one of her spiritual instructions: "I shall always have the pleasantest memories of the Sacred Heart at the Trinità dei Monti and the worthy Superioress. What a religious spirit, what perfection in all the Sisters!"

All virtuous people whom Mother Mary of St.

Euphrasia met on her path attracted her; and, when they were consecrated in religion, she felt drawn to bind herself to them with ties of spiritual fraternity. The religious of the Sacred Heart had established houses in many towns where she also had planted foundations, and in such cases had always received the Sisters of the Good Shepherd with the utmost kindness and charity, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was always on the watch to show the gratitude she felt towards them.

Before she left Rome, several great ladies who took an interest in her work and the foundations came to see her: the Princess Borghése, Princess Piombino (Cardinal Odescalchi's sister); Princess Gabrielli (niece of Napoleon the First); and the Duchess of Bracciano. All of these ladies were won by her ardent charity, and those among them who sought her advice came away both edified and delighted.

In one of these conversations she heard of Anna-Maria Taïgi, who had died in the odour of sanctity, on the 9th of June the year before. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia conceived a deep admiration for this great servant of God, and always afterwards had great confidence in her intercession: she often spoke of her to her religious.

But in the midst of all this flattering attention the constant theme of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's thoughts was her work, the conversion of sinners. This was the motive that took her, with her daughters and Father Vaures, to the Prison of St. Michael, where

the 200 female prisoners excited her most intense pity. Some of them caught hold of the religious by their rosaries and implored them to stay, saying, "Let us have white mothers to love us and make us happy."

A few months later, the Pope ordered the foundation of a second house of the Good Shepherd for the reception of female prisoners who should desire the grace of conversion.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, even during her short stay, had the joy of seeing happy changes at La Scaletta, due to her care and presence. Under the moral influence of her counsel the prisoners became gentler, and through contact with her affectionate and devoted daughters were gradually led back to order, the Spirit of Peace which is the Spirit of God, beginning to reign in the house.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was so far satisfied, but her heart was often at Angers, in that Novitiate which was to furnish her work with missionaries. Once more, before leaving Rome, she sought the Holy Father's blessing for herself and the Mother House. The very day after Father Vaures told the Pope she was going away, he granted her an interview. As before, Gregory XVI. promised to defend the Institute against those hostile to it, and to help it in difficulty. He besought her to have no anxiety about future embarrassments in the Roman monastery: the general direction, then entrusted to the Parish Priests of the town, would be eventually handed over absolutely to the religious themselves. Mother Mary of St.

Euphrasia thanked His Holiness, then threw herself at his feet, and after receiving his Apostolic Benediction, withdrew from his presence, her soul strengthened to meet tribulation.

Throughout the remainder of her life, her conversations with Cardinal Odescalchi, whose saintliness and great projects for the conversion of penitents had excited her admiration, were her abiding light. Their souls had met in mutual comprehension of a common work for the glory of God and the conversion of sinners, a work long dreamt of by the Cardinal, and already carried into effect by the religious. God caused them to meet. He blessed their labours and made them fruitful.

Mother Pelletier left Rome on 4th July with Mme. d'Andigné for Cività Vecchia, where they embarked, and a few days later once more saw the coasts of France. On the 17th she arrived at the gates of her convent at Angers, not having previously given notice of the day. There was a burst of joy throughout the community. "It is our Mother! it is our Mother!" The Abbé Mainguy had accompanied the Superioress General from Paris. The first thing she did on arriving was to go to the chapel to thank God for her journey and for the graces obtained for her Institute. The chapel showed many changes. There was a new tribune, new stalls. After Mass, her daughters, surrounding her, intoned the *Te Deum:* then all went to the great Community Room, where verses in her honour were sung, after which, out of

the fulness of her heart, the Mother General gave her daughters an account of all she had seen in Rome. She dwelt long on the Pope's goodness to the Good Shepherd, and of the consolations she had received at the tomb of the Holy Apostles.

That evening M. de Neuville wrote her this note:—

"MADAME,—It is very sweet to think of you at the Good Shepherd of Angers at last! Now the mind is quiet, the heart satisfied. No longer does the imagination see you far away in the dim distance, beaten about by waves, or jolted roughly along roads, tired out, in heavy miserable diligences. Thanks be to our Blessed Lady for protecting you and giving you back to your flock."

CHAPTER XXI

THE RETURN FROM ROME

1838

Instructions after the journey to Rome—Relics of St. Acapes—Their translation to the Church of the Good Shepherd—Cure of a sick man—Mother Pelletier's journey to Rheims—Cardinal Odescalchi enters the Jesuit Novitiate in Verona—His letter of farewell to the Good Shepherd—Sorrow of Mother Pelletier—Organisation of La Scaletta—Mother Pelletier's charity to the foundation at Rome—Her correspondence.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia returned to her usual course of labours, animated with fresh zeal by the recollection of her visit to Rome. Her words had new authority with her daughters, who now regarded her as sent to them by the Pope and Church with supernatural powers conferred upon her for their support, and for their confirmation in their vocation. No doubt her discourses were often echoes of her holy conversations with the Cardinal Protector, and at this period her daughters began their pleasant task of writing down the instructions she gave them upon the religious life, and the details of their rule.

Here is one of these instructions: it was given to the assembled Community, and is full of the ideas and feelings imbibed in the Holy City at the feet of the common Father of all the faithful:

"Do not forget that this house at Angers, which bears the legitimate title of Mother, alone has the special graces necessary to direct the others. It alone has received, for this purpose, an Apostolic Benediction from the Holy See.

"When, in virtue of holy obedience, my dear daughters, you go to one of our holy foundations, never cease to keep the Mother House before you, as your model; never prefer other houses for imitation, even when they seem to reach perfection.

"You all know what a weak plant ivy is. It cannot hold itself up unless supported; but, if put near an oak tree, it clings to it vigorously, grows, climbs up, and flourishes. We will always cling to our great oak tree, which is Rome. In this way, we shall be strong and have support in times of difficulty. I do not mean, of course, that Rome can enter into every little difficulty we may meet; nor am I so bold as to persuade myself that, sooner or later, Rome may never find it necessary to correct or reprove us, for we know she is our Mother, and we also know that mothers often have reasons for correcting their children. 'For what son is there,' says St. Paul, 'whom the father doth not correct?'

"It may also happen that false information is lodged at Rome: some proud discontented subject may deceive Superiors. But things of this kind are never to discourage you. At Rome truth always triumphs. Our work is God's work, and He will take care of it. Like sunflowers, so called because

they always turn to the sun; like the needle of the compass, which turns to the pole, so should you turn always to our Lord, to Rome, and to your Congregation.

"I do not know how to describe to you, my dear daughters, what I and your sisters felt when we were entering Rome. We had hardly seen the Holy City in the distance before we prostrated ourselves and kissed the sacred soil. When we were in the Basilica of the Vatican, I felt urged to promise God to give my life, if necessary, for each one of our foundations. The like vow was made at the same moment by our dear Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus (de Couëspel). The Holy Father and the Cardinals gave us the most paternal marks of their interest and affection for our work.

"The Holy Father said he regarded the Institute of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd as one of the fairest jewels in his crown. Ah! let us try by fidelity in all our observances and in our Holy Constitutions to correspond with the opinion entertained of us by the venerable Head of the Church. Do not veer from right to left, my dear daughters, as inconstant souls. Hold fast to the sacred trust of your vocation. Do not let yourselves be shaken by every breath of wind like pusillanimous souls. It may happen that, even with the best intentions, you may be counselled to introduce novelties into the Institute. But it will then behove you to hold firmly to what has been prescribed, refusing to admit

the breath of any strange spirit, or anything not in conformity with our holy rules. Keep your religious observances in their primitive purity.

"Apply yourselves diligently to the knowledge of everything regarding the Institute, even the smallest things. Be very recollected, gathering grain by grain, like little birds, the spiritual food that is given you. If one among you should be light, giddy, dissipated, instructions will be of no use to her: it will only be like throwing corn into a river.

"Remember, my dear daughters, that no change in our rules or constitutions can be made without the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff, who has confirmed them in their full extent, as well as in every particular detail, by the brief establishing the Generalat. Therefore, should any difficulty ever arise, recourse must be had to his Eminence, the Cardinal Protector of our Holy Congregation, and to Rome: thence our light will come. You are placed, for ever, under the protection of the Church; and, as the Holy Church can never err, it is impossible for a religious congregation to perish if it remain faithfully submissive to that august authority. If it should be persecuted anywhere, the Church will take care of it just as a mother does of the child she sees exposed to danger. If in one particular climate the sacred tree cannot bear fruit, the Church, with a mother's wisdom, will transplant it.

"Thank God continually for the great blessing He has accorded you in causing you to be born in the bosom of the Catholic Church, that holy, apostolic,

Roman Church, of which you have the honour of being doubly daughters. You are at the very gate of heaven: you have but one step to take to enter it. If any one among you should have the misfortune to fall, let her not lose courage: let her trust in God and rise immediately. Let us people the Church with holy souls. The Vicar of Christ on earth rejoices each time we ask him to authorise the foundation of another of our houses. Priests who labour with apostolic zeal for the conversion of souls would often be at a loss where to place in safety the prey snatched from the jaws of hell, if our houses were not prepared to offer a ready shelter.

"When I meditate upon our vocation and see how much it resembles that of missionaries, I feel myself consumed with zeal. I think sometimes that I hear small pathetic voices, the voices of little savages, saying to me, 'Mother! Mother! come to us, save us.' We must pray much. It is the Lord's will that we should be urgent in prayer if we want to obtain what we ask for. He wants us to be children of labour, prayer, and sacrifice. We must not be like stagnant water. If we want to draw upon ourselves and the Institute the blessings of Heaven, we must know how to bear with patience crosses, humiliations, contradictions.

"At one time I felt contradictions very much, and was troubled by them, especially from certain people. But now, whatever happens, I feel my soul at peace. At Rome, when I saw the Catacombs, where the

bones of the martyrs rest; the horrible cavern into which, through a narrow opening, the Apostles were thrust; the Coliseum, that amphitheatre where so many generous souls had to undergo such cruel tortures, I said to myself, 'What are our sufferings, our tribulations, in comparison with all these torments?' Let us suffer, then—suffer in union with the Church, which, in all ages, has had to bear calumny, tribulation, and persecution.

"By suffering, by zeal, by prayer, in close union with the Church militant, you will assuage the pain of the Church suffering; you will smooth the road to reach at last—were it even through martyrdom—the Church triumphant. And more than this, my dear daughters, by the crosses you will have borne generously, by holding fast to the observance of everything prescribed in our holy constitutions, our directory, and our spiritual exercises, you may have the honour of being regarded almost as so many martyrs. Be very fervent, then. For each one of you, God has great designs. Ask Him to accord you His love, the love of souls, and you will see what prodigies it will do for you.

"I shall often talk of Rome to you, and of the marvels I saw there."

During her stay in Rome, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia had been to the Catacombs, that great reliquary of the holy Pontiffs, martyrs, virgins of the primitive Church, and had devoutly followed those underground paths which generations of pilgrims have traversed in venerating worship ever since the faithful

of the early ages, in mystery and silence, practised there the rites of religion, pagan Rome meantime, above their heads, exhibiting the splendid pomps of her decadence.

Here, in some wider space, where several paths met and crossed, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia would have seen traces of the rude frescoes which decorated the place where the faithful met to assist at the Holy Sacrifice or hear sermons. On one side the marble slab of a tomb, inscribed with the names of Roman virgins; or a little farther on, sentences marking the place where some daughter or sister lay, and breathing the hope of eternal life as a pledge to those she left to rejoin her in heaven. All these things, no doubt, aroused in her touching memories, and a holy enthusiasm for religion, and an impulse to fall down and kiss the dust trampled under foot, but sanctified by the touch of martyrs.

She wanted to carry away with her, to her monastery at Angers, the body of a virgin from the Catacombs, to be to her Community a fruitful lesson of love and devotion to Jesus Christ and His Church, and to perpetuate there the spirit of the primitive Church, that spirit of veneration towards the saints' relics which surrounded them with beautiful works of art, and laid them beneath altars prepared for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, as if to bear witness to the saints' co-operation in our Lord's sacrifice, by the holiness of their life and heroism of their death.

Pope Gregory XVI. gave Mother Mary of St.

Euphrasia leave to take away the body of St. Acapes from the catacomb of St. Calixtus. The name was engraved on the tomb, "*Acapes in pace.*" A vial containing some of the martyr's blood stood near. "Acapes in peace"—simple words, engraved by loving hands, expressing the bliss of the saint safe from the strife of battle and the thought of devout visitors to her tomb. A wave of peace must, indeed, irresistibly pervade the soul of the pilgrim who stands before that humble memorial of fraternal piety, of homage to the heroic virtue which has laid down life for Jesus Christ: only a name, a few drops of blood, a word of rest; all is the extreme of simplicity and discreet reticence, but stimulating a holy curiosity to penetrate the mystery of that life crowned by the supreme glory of martyrdom.

Mme. d'Andigné ordered a reliquary for the holy body at her own expense. It was still unfinished when the time came for Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her companions to leave, and when afterwards forwarded with its sacred contents to Angers, was sent addressed to the Bishop, and without authentication of the relics.

This was furnished upon application to the Roman authorities, by whom it had been omitted, but a further difficulty then arose about removing the relics from the Cathedral at Angers to the Good Shepherd. This caused great pain to the Mother: only herself and her Community were to be deprived of the consolation of praying near relics which be-

longed to them. Acting upon the suggestion of M. de Neuville, however, she wrote to Rome asking for documents, declaring the reliquary and body of the saint to belong exclusively to her. This deed of property was duly sent, and on the 12th January 1839, the relics were carried to the Good Shepherd by order of Mgr. Montault. They arrived at night, and were received at the enclosure door by the religious in procession bearing torches, who carried them to an altar prepared in the choir of the Chapel. They then all sang the *Te Deum*, after which each in turn, according to rank, approached and venerated the sacred remains. Next day the relics were removed to their final resting-place in the exterior Church.

An annual commemoration of their arrival at the Convent was instituted for the 12th January, by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who had been the means of obtaining for it the sacred remains of this new protectress and their translation to it. Visible tokens of the Saint's protection were vouchsafed in particular favours received after novenas in her honour. Two religious, through her intercession, were cured in a manner regarded as miraculous. The following letter, from the Mother Provincial in Chili to the Superioress of the Order, gives an account of another instance:

"Saint Louis, *October 22nd*, 1888.

"Very Honoured Mother General,—Yesterday we saw a French priest who has been twenty-five

years in America. He was ordained priest at San Juan, in the Argentine Republic. He told us of the miraculous cure of his father at the Good Shepherd of Angers in 1839, by the relics of St. Acapes. I asked him to write the story down for me. He gave me a written account this morning, saying he had nearly forgotten French, and had found it very hard to write. I send it to you in this, dear Mother, thinking it will be of interest for the Annals. The gentleman who wrote it has a large property at Saint Louis, and wants us to find one near his. He speaks enthusiastically of the fine climate and of the future of the city, which is very well situated. Let us hope the Good Shepherd will soon be prospering there, and above all, that it may be the means of salvation to many souls."

"*Account of a miracle which took place in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd at Angers in* 1839, *written by the son of the person in whose behalf the miracle was worked.*

"In the year 1839, Jean-Baptiste Mauboussin, born at Baugé, was attacked by rheumatic pains, which almost totally deprived him of the use of his legs and of his sight. He used crutches, and spectacles with strong green glasses.

"About this time the translation of the relics of St. Acapes, martyr, to the Convent of the Good

Shepherd was much talked of. These relics had been given to the Superioress of the Community by his Holiness Pope Gregory XVI.

"M. Crosnier, tax-collector at Cuon, where Mauboussin lived, and also his friend, persuaded him to make a journey to the Saint's relics.

"The day of Mauboussin's arrival, no Mass could be said for his intention; but the chaplain approached the Communion rails and recited a Gospel over Mauboussin, who knelt there, his wife and their child of four years old kneeling by him. Suddenly the infirm man pushed aside the priest's stole with his right hand, lifted his spectacles off his eyes, and said, 'I see her!' 'What do you see? What do you see, my friend?' said Mme. Mauboussin. 'I see her,' he answered; 'I see the Saint!' And to the great astonishment of the chaplain and the few others present, he stood up without using his crutches, and walked, tears of gratitude in his eyes, to prostrate himself before the relics of St. Acapes.

"Twelve years later, the child who at four years old had been present at this scene, and now arrived at the age of sixteen, heard the chaplain of the Good Shepherd recount the facts which he now relates, and which he had often heard his mother repeat, and which, thus warranted, he now, at the age of fifty-six, intrusts to you, Madame.—Your respectful servant,

"J. F. Mauboussin."

Visiting her foundations was one of the most arduous but at the same time most consoling of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's duties. For years this task, self-imposed, in addition to the internal government of her monastery, was the purpose of all her journeys, visits to her daughters far away from Angers, in order to communicate to them something of her own consuming zeal through the medium of personal counsel, something of her own gentle earnestness in devotion, her courage in trials, and her unlimited confidence in Providence.

She had been unable to keep her promise to visit Rheims on returning from Rome, but in October set out for Champagne with the purpose of visiting that house which, thanks to the wisdom and care of M. Gros, Vicar-general of the diocese, now held forty penitents and twelve religious, and was thoroughly organised to meet every requirement of the Rule.

Her arrival was celebrated by her daughters as a great holiday. It was an occasion awakening many gentle memories: the beginnings of the Order, the sweet emotions of Novitiate days, the joys of profession with its sacred engagements; an occasion, too, for exhibiting to the Mother General every detail of organisation, for explaining the various industries adopted, and for telling her of benefactors; she on her side readily sympathising with every joy and sorrow, and making the Sisters feel, as did those of every convent she visited, that she was one of them-

selves, and her sojourn among them a blessing to the house.

A few months after her visit to Rome, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was called upon to bear a severe trial. Cardinal Odescalchi, the Protector of the Good Shepherd, to whose wise advice she owed so much of her own strength in carrying out her designs, and from whose position of authority, due to his saintly character as well as to his functions, such solid support was anticipated for her work, entered the Novitiate of the Jesuit fathers in Verona in the month of November.

The Cardinal was Vicar of Rome, Bishop of Sabina, Grand Prior of Malta, but resigned all these honours and titles, laying them at the Pope's feet to take the habit of St. Ignatius. From Florence he wrote a farewell letter to the religious of the Good Shepherd in Rome, which they immediately had framed, and then sent it to their Mother General, who, out of reverence to the first Protector of the Order, hung it up in her cell, and kept it there through life for edification and instruction.

In this letter, the holy Cardinal told his dear daughters that he had specially commended them to the Pope, and that he was sure His Holiness would give the Sisters at Rome the complete rule of their own house, and a protector who would continue to support a work of such importance for the redemption of souls. The Cardinal's departure made a great stir in Rome. By many persons it

was supposed he had gone on some mission to a foreign government, while all were astonished at his laying aside his honours. None mourned his departure as did the poor of the city. His charity was inexhaustible, he had often given away linen intended for use in his own household to the neglected poor. He left a letter which was not to be opened until he had gone, handing over the whole of his fortune to charities, with annuities for his servants. Out of this bequest the Pope sent a hundred Roman dollars to the Good Shepherd in Rome.

The religious were inconsolable at the departure of their holy Protector. His sister, Princess de Piombino, used often to come and talk to them of his saintliness and of the origin of his vocation to religion.

But perhaps no one felt his loss more than Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, or lost so much in losing him. While at Rome she had had close opportunities for appreciating his enlightened zeal. She had been very open with him, laying before him all her pious plans, and had received much light from him respecting her own sublime mission. She left Rome and returned to Angers with the feeling she was leaving him there to be the real Superior of the Order, who would resolve all her difficulties and clear away her doubts. It was therefore a very great trial to her to learn that he had gone to Verona to the Jesuit Novitiate. It is very difficult to accustom oneself to the loss of one in whom one has placed hope

and confidence, but it is in such moments of trial that one must vividly realise the sweetness and strength to be found in the Communion of Saints. We like to think of those absent from us following us through life with their prayers. It is a comfort to us to feel that their merits will draw down the grace of God upon us, and that through the agency of the holy angels there is established between us and them an active interchange of graces and merits, while we pray and work united with them in spirit.

Cardinal Odescalchi's letter, which was hung on the wall of the Mother General's cell, continually kept present before her mind the supernatural counsels and the saintliness of the first Protector of the Institute. The Sovereign Pontiff nominated as his successor Cardinal Joseph della Porta, Cardinal Vicar, who became Protector of the Good Shepherd and Superior of the house at Rome. That foundation became one of those the Mother loved with peculiar affection. She followed every smallest incident in its history with loving interest, and felt as if, through it, she were drawn into more direct communion with the Church.

The Pope's affection for the house, the wish he manifested to place the Refuge of St. Michael under the care of the religious of the Good Shepherd, were also motives for this attachment. Her daughters kept her fully informed of every visit they received from any of the Cardinals. Once Cardinal Mezzofanti, the marvellous linguist, preached to them in French. They gave her above all the minutest de-

tails of Cardinal Odescalchi's conversations with them before his departure for Verona, of his encouraging words, of those full of affection for their *Mother at Angers*, whom he took delight in calling "the beloved daughter of Holy Church," or, as Gregory XVI. had expressed it, "one of the richest rubies in the tiara of the Pope."

They told her, on another occasion, that his Eminence, like the Pope, thought that the rapidity with which the Good Shepherd had gained favour with the Romans was a mark of the supernatural character of its mission. Reputations grow very slowly in Rome; strangers have usually to submit to long trial before they are trusted; but the Good Shepherd had gained the sympathy of all classes from the very first, of Cardinals, Bishops, and of the faithful high and low. This general respect was both encouraging and consoling to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. Her heart lived among her daughters in Rome, while she envied their happy lot in being so near the head of the Church and in the very centre of Catholicity.

Between the Good Shepherd at Angers and the monastery at Rome there was a constant interchange of letters and verbal commissions. Father Fouillot, S.J., who had been Mother Pelletier's coadjutor in founding the house at Amiens, paid a visit to La Scaletta, and returning by Angers, was the bearer of letters and commissions to the Mother General from her religious. Every pilgrim from Rome who came to the Good Shepherd at Angers brought reports to the worthy

Mother of the marvellous work done in the Eternal City by her daughters, acting under her direction, and in the spirit of their Order, and of the consequent admiration of the Roman people.

They had transformed a prison-house, revolting in aspect, inhabited by rebellious, undisciplined subjects, into a house of prayer, pleasant to see, beautifully kept, where no sound was heard but the singing of hymns. The prison of La Scaletta was changed into a home of the Good Shepherd. Following the principle of dividing into categories, which the Mother Foundress had laid down for all her houses, as essential to order and morality, the religious at La Scaletta had two classes: that of young girls, brought by their parents, and that of married women, sent by the civil authorities. The first class, composed of young girls, was naturally the easier to manage. Souls not hardened by the long habit of vice are readily attracted by virtue when it is manifested to them in all its glorious beauty, as in Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's daughters. It required long patience and energy to lead back to order the penitents of the second class. Before the arrival of the nuns, these women had been accustomed to spend most of their time in the kitchen or refectory, instead of at work. As an inducement, the nuns proposed that they should sell for their own profit any little things they made; and gradually, thanks to their angelic patience, the virtue of the Sisters gained the ascendancy in the house. The penitents of the second class, like the first, found

it impossible to resist the salutary influence which surrounded them. The Pope, hearing of the marvels effected, insisted on more religious being sent to relieve the original band; for, said he, these French Sisters, true missionaries of the Church, with the high-spirited courage of their nation, would kill themselves with work.

The Mother Foundress, meantime, vied with her daughters in zeal and devotedness for the prosperity and good order of the Roman convent. It was her desire that it should be a model house, the ideal type in the capital of the Catholic world, which all might see who wanted to form a judgment of her work, and the supernatural advantages offered by it. Poor as the Mother House was, she sent alms to the Roman foundation. Once by Father Vaures she sent 350 francs. In every pressing necessity all the foundations turned to the Mother Foundress for help that never failed. If all the various sums sent in this manner to her daughters during Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's long administration were reckoned, the sum total would be astonishing. The works that God approves, that He blesses, have a gift from Him of multiplying alms. The alms of the faithful, passing through the hands of the great servants of God, acquire a blessing and supernatural power for good. The world organises balls and feasts to attract alms for the poor. But these incongruous methods of exciting and developing fraternal charity, this plan of relieving the destitute and showing them sympathy

by organising pleasures for the rich, has never been countenanced by the Church. Her methods of helping the unfortunate, of comforting her suffering children, are compassion and tenderness of heart.

Much was given to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, and, on her side, she too gave largely to the poor, and to the distressed houses of her Order.

Her correspondence with the beloved house at Rome was very active. This foundation had a certain renown, profitable to the whole Congregation, derived from the visits of the French Bishops and great Roman notabilities. In time, Pope Gregory XVI. granted it the perfect independence of self-government. Those who helped most in obtaining this independence were Cardinal Lambruschini and Cardinal Patrizi, the latter showing such kindness that he seemed anxious to fill Cardinal Odescalchi's vacant place. When he visited La Scaletta, after he had blessed the religious, he used to beg the Superioress to write and tell the Mother General that he sent her also a special blessing. They, however, loved to think of her as always present, that thus they might, whilst at prayer or work, live in constant union with their Foundress.

At Angers, the Mother General caused all in the convent to share her own affection for the Roman convent. The feast of St. Euphrasia was celebrated this year with more than usual festivity, and mention was made of the foundation at Rome in a dialogue composed in the good Mother's honour. God had showered kindness on her, and it was her wish to

return His mercies by showing kindness to her daughters and those under her guardianship. She provided the classes with all the clothing they wanted, and gave to each sister her Office-book newly bound. She delighted in giving, and loved to please others, so that it often seemed as if she were under obligation to those on whom she conferred gifts. She knew also that it pleased her daughters to receive from her hands the garments they wore or the books they used. To them her gifts always possessed a special grace.

CHAPTER XXII

FOUNDATIONS AT CHAMBÉRY AND PERPIGNAN

1839

Foundation at Chambéry—Mlle. Guittaud—Part taken by her in the foundation—Her interview with Mme. Pelletier—Devotion to the holy angels—Consolidation of the house—Perpignan—Father Barthès' part in the foundation there—Difficulties—Mother Pelletier's charity—Her calmness under trial—Instruction upon charity.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was often called by God to give solidity to private charitable undertakings, which, but for the Good Shepherd, would, at the death of their founders, have ceased to exist. The religious Order stepped in to hold them together, and to protect them against time. The work of individuals dies with them, but communities perpetuate life in the works they found. It was this durability of the monastic orders which made them in past ages not only the safest homes of suffering humanity but the abode of literature and art.

At Chambéry there lived a holy personage, Mlle. Lawrence Guittaud, who, since youth, had devoted herself to prisoners and young girls abandoned to evil. Anecdotes of her charity had become almost legendary everywhere in Savoy, and the King of Sardinia had often pardoned criminals in whom she

took an interest. Soldiers guarding prisoners had often encountered her and been touchingly exhorted to deal gently with the beloved objects of her protecting solicitude. She had often followed gangs of convicts, who were being moved from one town to another, to exhort them to repentance, and also to persuade their guardians not to treat them harshly.

For years this lady had earnestly longed to found a House of Refuge in Chambéry, where she might collect the young girls she was trying to lead back to God; but the Archbishop had been at first afraid to allow it. She had therefore, to satisfy her zeal, meantime converted her own house into a kind of refuge, and had there, in course of time, as many as fifteen girls, picked up at prison doors or found in suspicious houses. God urged her interiorly to the work, and no obstacle hindered her charity. She often snatched girls away from those leading them astray, and, on one such occasion, a man struck her in the street with his riding whip.

It was always in Communion that our Lord spoke to her, and set before her the horror of sin, urging her to do all she could to destroy it.

One day the work seemed to be in great danger. A notice she felt bound to obey came, ordering the dismissal of the girls. But she told them to pray, and remained in prayer all night herself. She thought our Lord appeared to her in His Passion, and that He commanded her neither to lose courage nor discontinue her work. Next day one of her penitents

said to her, "Mademoiselle, you saw the good God last night. I saw your room lighted up, as it were, by the brightness of the sun."

The Archbishop, upon information received from Mlle. Guittaud's director, sent for her and gave her leave to hire a house for a Refuge.

She had long meditated confiding her penitents to the care of a religious community, and had visited the Good Shepherd, both at Puy and Grenoble, with this end in view. At Puy she met Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, to whom she mentioned her desires, and from whom she received advice how to carry them out.

It was to her, therefore, when her plan was approved by the Archbishop and by the King of Sardinia, that she had recourse asking her to accept the direction of the work. When all was settled, the pious lady anxiously awaited the arrival of her auxiliaries. It was a cold January evening when they came, and were received by Mlle. Guittaud, at whose house they stayed that night. At four o'clock next morning she took them to a small house prepared for them, where Mass was said in the little chapel she had made ready. She was present with them at the Holy Sacrifice, and then she confided her fifteen girls to their charge.

Hardly were the nuns settled in their humble convent than they began to think of enlarging their quarters. A more spacious house was bought for them by M. Revel their Superior, and Mlle. Guittaud, their patroness; but the funds required for legal possession

were insufficient, and debt was incurred. Mlle. Guittaud, whom M. Revel called the "mendicant," started off on a begging expedition, converting sinners by the way. She visited Turin, Milan, all the towns of Savoy and Eastern France, and, finally, in 1843, Paris, by advice of the Curé d'Ars, who bestowed a small alms upon her himself, and foretold the success of her journey.

Her expeditions, lotteries in Paris, and quests for alms sound like episodes in a romance. She was rudely rebuffed where she expected kindly reception, heartily assisted by people of whom she knew nothing. At St. Roch the Abbé Bautain preached for her in the presence of Queen Amélie, who became her patroness. The Marquis de Brignoles introduced her to the houses of his friends. She went back to Chambéry with alms to support her beloved house of the Good Shepherd. Indeed, her whole life was spent in providing it with either subjects or the means of subsistence.

She was skilful as well as zealous in dealing with young girls who had gone astray. When she heard of one, no matter where, she sought her out, and reasoned with her, drawing so vivid a picture of the misery in store for all who persevere in vice that her words generally proved efficacious, and the lost sheep was brought to the Refuge.

Other people in Chambéry besides Mlle. Guittaud and M. Revel, Vicar-General to Mgr. Martinet, the Archbishop, helped to prepare the foundation. The

King of Sardinia promised his patronage, and some of the townspeople also assisted it. As we have already mentioned, a small house was ready for the four religious who arrived in 1839, and they received kindly help in establishing themselves first there and afterwards in a larger convent. The memory of St. Francis de Sales, preserved in the district, greatly attracted Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. To send her daughters to labour in the great Saint's own country filled her with joy.

Each time a fresh band of her dear daughters went forth from the Mother House, she multiplied her prayers for their success, and her fervour increased. Prayer accompanied the beginning of every new enterprise. The day the religious left for Chambéry, she wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers:—

"*January 1st*, 1839.

"To-day, after we had heard five o'clock Mass, been to Communion, recited the Veni Creator nine times, terminated a novena, and held the great Chapter of Nomination, all being carried out according to our rules and observances, our glorious colony started for Chambéry, at six o'clock, under the protection of God and Our Lady, and that of the good King of Sardinia, who has expressed his readiness to lend his support."

Until she was certain of their safe arrival, the good Mother was very anxious to hear often, that she might follow them in prayer through every stage of

their journey, and be with them, in spirit, in each community which offered them hospitality. When she heard that the Visitation nuns at Mâcon had received them with charity and affection becoming St. Jane Frances de Chantal's daughters, she greatly rejoiced, and again when she heard that at Lyons they had slept at the house of Mlle. Jaricot, and had been with her to St. Philomena's Chapel at Fourvière, and also that the Good Shepherd at Grenoble reminded them of Angers, because the Sisters were so devout and recollected.

The kindness and hospitality shown to her daughters opened her heart to other Orders, and she loved to render any service she could to religious. This spirit of fraternity, the spirit which sees fellow-labourers in every Order, and rivals in none, she carefully impressed upon her daughters, among whom it is still a marked feature. The office they have undertaken as their own mission, that of restoration, of re-instating peace and order in the place usurped by trouble and confusion, being the most arduous in the house of God, they also find, wherever they go to look for lost sheep, friends and admirers in other orders—the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, the religious of the Sacred Heart, and others.

When Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia knew that her daughters were safe at Chambéry, she instantly began to wonder how they would be received by the authorities, and what impression the work would create at first. She knew from experience the im-

portance of not letting first opportunities slip: the instinctive attraction to benevolence felt by most people often gives a new work a good chance of success. She rejoiced, therefore, to hear that M. Revel, Vicar-General of Chambéry, received her daughters as sent by Heaven, and that the Archbishop himself, although seriously ill, commended them to his clergy and the authorities of the town. Savoy, ever true to the ancient faith, would have a natural sympathy for devoted women like the religious of the Good Shepherd, coming from their distant home in France, a country where faith and customs still recall the primitive ages of Christianity. The following year, Mgr. Billiet succeeded Mgr. Martinet as Archbishop of Chambéry, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia wrote to the Superior, "Your Archbishop's kindness, and that of our very charitable M. Revel, touch us much. Oh! how much we owe them! Let us do our best to correspond to their views and generous sacrifices, and endeavour to be their consolation."

Here, as everywhere else, she recommends gratitude to her daughters. Her respect for authority made her full of submission to her ecclesiastical superiors; and when she found them friendly to her work, and taking a condescending interest in it, her soul, always very easily moved to gratitude, poured itself out in acts of thanksgiving. But she knew that the beginning is very often not the time of greatest trial for a foundation. At first, religious are often surrounded

by the zeal and charity of admirers, some of whom may have very little Christian feeling, yet who respect their vocation as sublime. The time of trial comes when the first enthusiasm has passed, and it is a necessity to sustain, by means of alms, a house struggling under great poverty.

Towards the close of 1841, the committee charged with the administration of the convent at Chambéry became alarmed at the heavy expense, and feeling unable to meet the obligations falling upon them, wrote to the Mother Foundress, begging her to withdraw her daughters. If foundations are hard to make, if they require anxious thought and cause many labours, to see one already fairly established on the point of failing is a still harder trial. Confronted by baffled efforts, the indifference of the surrounding world apparently checking the progress of the Good Shepherd, and her daughters downcast, it was before such trials as these that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia exhibited every resource of her broad mind, strong character, and generous nature in order to avoid defeat, and such was her zeal for the souls of sinners that no obstacle alarmed her.

When the letter from the committee arrived, she wrote to the Archbishop himself, expressing her regret that the work should be arrested. In her great zeal for souls she proposed to him that he should continue his moral support of the convent, and that the Mother House at Angers should assume all pecuniary responsibility. The salvation

of souls being the one purpose of all her thoughts and actions, she thus chose to sacrifice the Mother House for the sake of an imperilled foundation. The young women at Chambéry were her children as well as those at Angers. Her zeal and disinterestedness touched Mgr. Billiet. He put a stop to the negotiations already begun with the Sisters of St. Joseph about taking the Refuge, and wrote to accept Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's charitable offer.

She now set to work to renew the foundation, withdrawing the old staff, and sending in their place other religious fresh from the Novitiate and from her own instructions. They talked over her parting advice as they travelled, and they invoked the guardian angels of the Archbishop of Chambéry and of his Vicars-General, imploring them to smooth away the difficulties of their ministry. They had learnt from their holy Foundress the touching practice of thus invoking the holy angels to obtain human help for their work, and their faith in the communion of saints, like hers, was so strong that they felt that heaven and earth are ever united in favour of the same interests and the same joys.

M. Tronson, in his "Summary of the Fervent Priest's Devotions," says, in an examination of conscience, "Has our devotion to the holy angels made us follow the example set by various devout persons, in the pious practice of always paying some devotion to the guardian angels of places we

are in, or of people with whom we have to transact business, persuaded that this is an excellent way of doing God's Will, and of ensuring the increase of His glory?"

When the religious arrived at Chambéry, the difficulties had vanished. They moved into a new house and made it into a convent, conforming to the rules of the Institute, writing soon afterwards to tell the Mother-General of the kindness shown them. Everything pleased them, including the penitents, who, to become docile, only needed leave now and then to sing their pretty Savoyard songs. In 1845, Sister Mary of St. Olympia Daumas wrote to the Mother Foundress that the King of Sardinia, Charles Albert, and his son, the Duke of Genoa, had paid the convent a visit, and had evinced great interest in it. The Count de la Marguerita came also three times, and made such large offerings that the foundation was rescued from some of its embarrassments. All this charity from the great ones of the world, in the spirit of a true daughter of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, the Superioress traced to a Divine source.

But while forming new ties, the Mother Foundress carefully guarded old ones from severance. All her friendships tended to the salvation of souls and the spread of her work. The Jesuit fathers, so helpful in early days, were always ready to commend the work in mission sermons, and came to the Good Shepherd for help in grappling with the wretchedness of large towns. A foundation of the Order seemed,

for instance, to Father Barthès the best way of perpetuating among a certain class the effects of a Retreat he had preached at Perpignan. He wrote of it to the Mother Foundress towards the end of November 1838, "I recommend to your good will Perpignan, the frontier town of Spain."

It was one month later, in December, that Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia sent one of her assistants, Sister Mary of Calvary, to make the first overtures to the authorities. While making the journey, this sister wrote to her that the inhabitants of the South loved their Good Shepherd houses, that the convent at Arles was a paradise, and the religious so surrounded by thoughtful attention that it made Father Barthès fear for them lest they should fail to correspond with the great graces of God, who seemed to multiply miracles at every step, and who permitted them to prosper where others perished. This letter rejoiced the good Mother's heart, but she little knew that the advances coming from Perpignan had been made without the Bishop's knowledge. This mistake was eventually the source of many annoyances; and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, always very sensible of the importance of submission to ecclesiastical superiors, felt it deeply. She wrote to Sister Mary of Calvary, telling her to explain the state of the case to the Bishop, to do nothing without his full consent, and to do all she could to gain his good-will. He was soon won by this conduct, and expressed a wish that Sister Mary of Calvary should be left at Perpignan.

The Mother Foundress's charity was heavily taxed in the beginning. She gave the last sou she had, for the journey of the nuns who were to remain at Perpignan. She was ill at the time, and wrote from her bed:—

"Let us pray, suffer, and await better days: we are so beset with crosses, death, and affliction that we can do nothing but submit and adore God's Will. This last journey is the finishing touch: we have not a farthing left; I am borrowing from a notary for to-morrow's journey."

But it would be a mistake to suppose that sickness, poverty, or money embarrassments were capable of hindering her zeal. A fortnight later, writing again to Sister Mary of Calvary, she says:—

"The Lord allows me no rest. The Bishop of Avignon wants to begin at once. Our Sisters start next Monday: imagine the work it entails! Then, another letter, just come, asks for us at Mons, in Belgium. We have more than we can do. How marvellous it is! and now, too, just when every foundation is doubling in size. Happily, and this I say with much thankfulness, there is profound peace everywhere."

In times like these, when difficulties weigh upon the Mother Foundress, and she seems overdone with work, we see her steadily pursuing her way in peaceful recollection, or resting calmly at our Lord's feet, and often speaking of His Sacred Passion.

The instructions she gave the Community were always full of ardent charity for the penitents. They

were eloquent, because inspired by sincere love of souls, and because, by personal devotion, she daily gave practical exemplification of all that she recommended. She began one of her instructions about this time in the following manner :—

"The following passage from the Holy Gospel is exactly adapted to our vocation: 'What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat doth not light a candle . . . and seek diligently until she find it: and when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying, rejoice with me?' Our groats are our penitents. Rejoice that they have come to the fold, for they are like so many groats which were lost and are found. They were yours, poor children, before you knew them. You ought to love them, my dear daughters; and only by labouring for them will you ever reach heaven. Strive to bring them back to God, that is our vocation, the vocation by which it has pleased the Lord to call you, and to distinguish you among many others in the great family of His Church. A religious of our Congregation deserves esteem only in proportion to her charity for our dear penitents and her devotedness to their salvation.

"This very morning we received a poor young woman, twenty-five years old, who was in such extremity of wretchedness that she had lost all hope. Among other questions, I asked her if she had ever made her first communion. 'May be I have,' she answered; 'but, to tell you the truth, I don't rightly know what first communion means. I remember

that once, when I was very ill, they brought me what they called the Holy Viaticum. But I don't know what it was, and I don't know anything except sin and hell.' I asked her next whether she would like something to eat. 'Oh, Mother,' she answered, 'you ask me to eat when I have only just come! Yesterday I was famished with hunger, and no one offered me anything. I am really ashamed to have come in such a state: I wanted to beg a dress so as to look a little more respectable when I came to you.' While she was speaking she began to cry, and her tears broke my heart. 'Do you ever think of praying to Our Blessed Lady, my child?' I asked her. 'Oh yes,' she replied, 'even when I was at my worst, I never forgot to say a Hail Mary every day.' She had been found by a charitable person, who took pity on her wretched state and brought her here. It shows Our Blessed Lady's protection and admirable clemency towards sinners who scarcely think of her.

"Oh, how little worthy to be called '*coöperatrixes*' with our Divine Saviour should we be, if we were not animated with a great kindness and great charity towards our dear penitents. Remember, my daughters, that they call you by the sweet name of Mother, and that you must indeed be their mothers according to grace, to bring them up in the love and fear of the Lord. It is your work to contribute to their spiritual regeneration, to revive the Divine life in them. There should be a holy rivalry among you, however you

may be employed, in competing with one another to attain as far as possible your noble end, which is the sanctification of your neighbour.

"Just as a fond mother loves her children without any limit, so must you love the penitents, whether you have direct charge of them or otherwise. Love them, no matter what natural defects they may have, or however unattractive you may find their miseries. I mean, love them with sentiments inspired by faith, seeing in them their title to be called 'the children of God.' Love them all with sincerity in God, without familiarity, with nothing of lower nature in your love, and, above all, without particular friendships. If you are not careful upon these points you will ruin them, and they will have no respect for you. You already understand in what manner I would have you love them. But at the same time I must also warn you to be on your guard against being caught by their cunning, to fear it as you would that of the serpent. Remember that all the time we are studying our poor children to know them, they are studying us also carefully, I might almost say malignantly, and trying to read us. You may be sure they examine you from head to foot; they never cease watching us, and it is absolutely necessary that their scrutinising eyes should never find anything disedifying.

"A mistress, regardless herself of obedience or regularity, may rest assured she will convert no penitent. A mistress without solid sustained piety will do no good to souls. I should be very much distressed, my

dear daughters, if I knew that a sister disliked being employed in the Penitents' class, was not content to be sent to our classes. Do you know what we ought to think of one who speaks in this kind of way? One could but think that the zeal we ought all to have for the salvation of souls was stifled in her by an inordinate love of ease, by the desire to satisfy her own taste, to enjoy comfort, and that she did not understand that such things are incompatible with self-sacrifice and charity towards our neighbour."

CHAPTER XXIII

FOUNDATIONS OF NICE, AVIGNON, AND BOURGES

Foundation at Nice—Mission of Mme. de Couëspel—Letter of Mgr. Flaget—Foundation at Avignon—Mother Pelletier and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament—Trials—Mgr. du Pont—Inundation of the Rhône—Foundation at Bourges—Mother Pelletier's confidence in the Saints.

As early as 1836 negotiations were opened between Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and Mgr. Galvano, the Bishop of Nice, with reference to a foundation in that town, which rejoices in a climate which makes it a kind of earthly paradise. On the way to Rome, in 1838, the Mother General deputed Mother Mary St. Teresa of Jesus (de Couëspel) to branch off from Marseilles and pay a preparatory visit to Nice; but the journey, attempted first by sea, in a ship which broke down to the danger of the passengers' lives, and secondly by land, through a region infested by brigands who obliged the travellers to turn back, was finally abandoned.

It was not until she came from Rome, in 1839, that Mme. de Couëspel succeeded in seeing Mgr. Galvano and visiting Nice. He gave her the charge of an institution known as La Providence, where a worthy canon of the Cathedral, M. de Cesale, had collected

about one hundred girls, the older having charge of the younger. The Bishop, struck by Mme. de Couëspel's tact and ability, was anxious that she should remain to be Superioress. The governor of the town, Rudolf de Maistre (son of the author of "Evenings in St. Petersburg"), joined him in entreating the Mother General to consent to the arrangement; and Mgr. Flaget (at Nice for a short time on his way to America), at their joint instance wrote to the Mother to the same effect. Mme. de Couëspel's services to her at the Mother House would have been very valuable, but such urgent demands, and Mgr. Flaget's letter (having always regarded his advice as the expression of God's will for her), she felt unable to resist.

"Madame," Mgr. Flaget wrote, "if you accede to Monseigneur's most just and honourable request, you will please him much; you will contribute to the happiness of most of those who live in the house, and give the greatest joy to one whose delight it is to extol the religious of the Good Shepherd."

Mother Pelletier thought he had certain spiritual rights over Mme. de Couëspel, for it was he who had guided her in her widowhood to the religious life, and given her the holy habit in 1836.

On the 1st April, Mme. de Couëspel opened the classes, and in a few days was joined by other sisters from Angers. Her perfect obedience, her ready willingness to fly wherever sent, by the voice of superiors, to help souls, were present to the Mother

General's mind when giving the following instruction to her daughters on the spirit of their vocation, which is that of devotedness to sinners, wherever placed by holy obedience:

"I am happy in being able to say to you that our beloved Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus (de Couëspel) is a worthy example of what it is thoroughly to understand the spirit of our vocation. We wrote to her to leave Rome, and when she saw our letter, she says she felt as if a voice said to her, 'Go quickly; there may be souls in need of you.' She felt interiorly she would not return at once to Angers. Nor was she mistaken; for when she reached Nice, the Bishop prevented her from continuing her journey, and kept her to take charge of the new house. She is a remarkable person, full of merit, a great benefactress to us, a religious who possesses all sorts of good qualities, and who might take her place at the head of any important work; but, instead of thinking of the highest charge, she begs us to send a Superioress capable of directing things in the spirit of the Congregation, to whom she proposes giving an exact account of everything; and then, with our permission, to retire, and only have care of the penitents, among whom she finds her delight and consolation.

"After considering such an example, will any one show repugnance at being employed in the classes, or find obedience difficult when it is proposed to them to go and help at one of the foundations? What! you know you are shepherdesses, guardians of the sheep

and yet you would rather not have care of the flock! What can the Divine Shepherd, in whose service you are placed, do with you?

"M. de Neuville is far more severe than I am: he often says to me that I should speak in this way to every postulant who comes, that I should leave her in ignorance of nothing that is hard in our vocation or obligations; and then he says, 'If any one allows to you that her purpose is meditation and repose in God, and not all this hard work, say at once to her, "My daughter, God bless you; go to Carmel or the Visitation, and ask the Mother to receive you; God does not call you here."'

"In our Institute no good can be done except through love of our neighbour and zeal for the salvation of his soul; and we may go so far as to say of ourselves, that if we have in any degree obtained the success we hoped for, it has been only through zealous love for our penitents.

"It is generally allowed that love of souls founded the Institute; for truly I had neither wealth, nor talents, nor any exterior charms; but I have always loved the penitents, loved them with all the strength of my soul. I even vowed that I would never refuse any one because she had nothing to give; yet, you see, my dear daughters, that we are none the poorer for it.

"The gifts and benefits we receive are not for ourselves: they are for those who demand our care. It is not indeed we, or our wretched persons, that

attract benedictions from the Sovereign Pontiff, encouragements from their Lordships the Bishops, and protection from every government, it matters not where. All these things are merited by our vocation, our zeal, and love for our penitents. Do you think the Pope, Bishops, or great ones of earth would ever have given us a thought if we had stayed in the world? It is our duty consequently to acquire the virtues proper to our state, and to labour with efficacy in the holy task to which we are dedicated."

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was greatly occupied with other requests for foundations when she decided to accept that of Nice, with the 100 penitents already collected there. Her zeal found it irresistible.

The following letter is addressed by her to the Superioress at Nancy:

"From our Monastery at Angers,
March 21st, 1839.

"I will do great things for my people."

"My very dear and beloved daughter,

"You have, I am sure, rejoiced to hear of the great things done for our holy Institute; you, daughter of the work, to whom it is so very dear, taste and see how sweet is the Lord! Oh! how many things there will be to tell you of when we go to your land of Gessen! We hope, by the grace of God, to leave here as you desire, on the 2nd of May, in order to visit our dear Northern houses. But before that, on Easter Monday, April 1st, we send three professed to Nancy. But our dear dove, Sister Mary of St. Eliza-

beth can explain everything to you, for my soul, overwhelmed with favours and lost in its own nothingness, craves for a word or two with you about these marvellous works. Tell me, daughter of my heart, what you think: ought we to go to Germany? Look at it in the sight of God. The Queen of Bavaria has just written, through her secretaries, to invite us: wretched servants that we are.

"But there is all Italy too: Rome offered by the Sacred Head of the Church; Piedmont by the King of Sardinia. What ought we to do? Nice will be a *grand* work. Then come Genoa and Turin. But we must leave on Easter Monday. Oh, my daughter, if you were not at Ratisbonne, I should command you to come here in Holy Week, to talk over Nice with me, because of our close union of soul. To me, next to Rome, it seems our greatest work. Oh my God! enlighten me.

"[*Saturday evening.*] Another marvel! which exceeds anything I have ever seen. Nice is settled, but the Bishops, Senate, and Court all urgently demand that our good Sister Mary of St. Teresa of Jesus shall be Superioress! Oh, chosen soul of God! The king has given us a magnificent house. It was governed by seculars, who gave it up, and their 100 penitents are ours—our dear illustrious widow at the head.

"Farewell! a thousand times farewell! A thousand thanks to the Divine Goodness.—Your affectionate Mary of St. Euphrasia, who is lost in love of God and gratitude to Him, and loves you more than her own life.

"(*For yourself only, beloved daughter.*) Set your affairs in order, pray, make haste with the work, finish it. If we can put off Germany . . . I shall certainly take you for Italy. As soon as possible you shall go to found Genoa and Turin. I speak seriously to you before God. Make haste to found and form our good sister St. Margaret—time presses."

Again she wrote:

"*March 30th*, 1839.

"Oh, my daughter; yes, I do certainly share your sorrows, and, were it not so, I should be very unkind. I send you the help and everything you ask for. We are just going to write to Sister St. Louis; she shall stay there, or, at any rate, shall not go to found; and in May we will come and visit you. What else do you desire, my child? God alone knows how much I want to help you. Our sisters at Nice are just starting for that miraculous work: they fly to help Sister Mary Teresa of Jesus, who is in the midst of her hundred penitents—our Blessed Lady's present to her on the evening of the feast of St. Euphrasia, besides 200,000 francs. It is indeed a miracle. And so much to come all at the same time! But it was necessary to have crosses. Those who were friendly to us yesterday have now turned on us, threaten us, try to take away our foundations, and will not hear of new ones. But what is man! Everything attaches me more closely to God alone, and to our work.—Your attached MARY OF ST. EUPHRASIA."

Under Mme. de Couëspel's direction the foundation at Nice was soon in a flourishing state, and was moved to a new house which, through the charity of the Bishop and civil authorities, was enlarged before the religious and penitents went to it. It had large gardens, and was a fine property overlooking the Mediterranean. The arrival of the religious was celebrated with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament in which the city Governor, the President of the Senate, and other notables of the town, carried the canopy. In 1846, the new convent church was solemnly blessed by Mgr. Galvano, who had the happiness of baptizing some negresses there, confirming several penitents, and giving first Communion to a number of the younger girls. Among the godmothers of the negresses was the Governor's daughter, Mlle. Françoise de Maistre. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia and her daughters rejoiced to see this Christian blending of the upper and lower classes.

The mortal remains of a good benefactress now repose within its walls, those of a noble Polish lady belonging to the Potocki family, who asked to be buried there. The church in the convent at Nice is an exact copy of that of Angers.

The Archbishop of Avignon, moved by all he heard of the work of the Foundress of the Good Shepherd, wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in October 1838, to ask for a foundation. Proposals of this kind always found ready acceptance with her, and when preliminaries were settled, she despatched a

little band of sisters, who placed themselves at Mgr. du Pont's disposal, in order to begin a convent of their Order. The kind Archbishop undertook to be their adviser in their relations with the authorities and their benefactors, and told them that if they were prudent in business, persevering, and calm, they would overcome all difficulties. Their Mother General had charged them to be docile towards him, as to their father and first benefactor in Avignon.

She never, indeed, lost any opportunity of winning sympathy for her daughters from those dear to God. Learning from them that the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament had shown them hospitality, she wrote a letter of thanks. This was the beginning of a touching connection between the two communities, in which each sought the other's spiritual advancement. The Superioress' letters delighted the Mother Foundress, not only because of the kindly praise she gave her daughters, but because of their affection. She rejoiced most of all in the prayers promised for the success of her work. Her faith in prayer was boundless, and she loved to commend herself in all her difficulties to the prayers, not only of her own religious, but of every pious person interested in the Institute.

Trials soon came from Avignon. Letters arrived telling Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia that the work would find no means of support, and that as the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova had a house there already, the Good Shepherd was not wanted. Other letters, instigated by the enemy of all good, followed,

calumniating the Archbishop, and denouncing him as opposed to the work and discouraging benefactors. Nothing relieves a sensitive heart under such painful circumstances so much as perfect openness. The Mother Foundress immediately communicated these reports to Mgr. du Pont, who, in reply, wrote to her affectionately, thanking her for her frankness, and reassuring her as to his feelings, which had not varied. He admired the Good Shepherd, and was devoted to the interests of the work as from the first, and was thankful to have it in his diocese. He issued also a printed paper recommending it to the charity of his diocesans, and explaining to the faithful its nature and purpose, reminding them that the Pope and Sacred College held it in special regard.

This ended Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's troubles. A revulsion of feeling took place at Avignon, and there was a warm outburst of affection and devotion. Avignon was, however, in many ways to cause the Mother's tender heart to suffer. The foundation was only a year old when the house was almost wrecked by the rising of the Rhône. The Sisters and their children were driven out and obliged to take refuge with the Hospital Sisters, and, when able to return, found a scene of havoc and desolation. In their distress they turned first of all to their Mother General for help for themselves and their flock, and for spiritual counsel.

Whatever difficulties might press on her from her various houses, she always had recourse to our Blessed

Lady and the Saints; and, far from feeling discouraged or inclined to lessen her work, she would promise her celestial patrons that if they would but help her in present difficulties, she would undertake new foundations. The more she was pressed for means the more solemn did she make her prayers and promises. In 1839, when she had not enough money to meet the expenses of the Mother House, she assembled her council, and, together with them, made a solemn promise to the Blessed Virgin to found a house at Bourges if she would send the temporal assistance required; and when the prayer was granted, she lost no time in fulfilling her promise.

On her way to Rome, she had been presented to Mgr. Villèle at Bourges, and after her return to Angers he wrote asking for a foundation in the capital of Berri, a canon of the Cathedral, M. Mangin, joining in the request. Three religious were sent to start the foundation, and were soon followed by as many more.

In spite of her own poverty, she was always the temporal Providence of her foundations. She sent considerable sums to Bourges at the beginning and later, when the needs of the establishment made larger quarters necessary. The religious converted the new convent into an exact likeness of the Mother House at Angers.

Later on, Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia paid them a visit, which they looked upon as a signal favour. They joyfully showed her their beautiful

enclosure; it had formerly belonged to Carmelites, and had in it a little chapel, built in 1625, by Mother Margaret of St. Joseph, which, to the Religious of the Good Shepherd, took the place of the Oratory of the Immaculate Conception, which they were accustomed to in their Monastery at Angers. They loved their Mother to see that Bourges kept up the devotions and processions of the Mother House, while on her side she delighted in this family spirit, which showed that her daughters carried with them to the foundations the customs and habits contracted during the period of their religious formation.

Phot. Dubut, à Angers.

LA R^de^ MÈRE MARIE DE S^te^ EUPHRASIE PELLETIER
et ses premières filles devant M^gr^ Montault, Evêque d'Angers,
qui leur remet le livre de leurs Règles.

CHAPTER XXIV

MONS—DEATH OF MGR. MONTAULT

1839

Foundation at Mons — Mother Pelletier's visit to Belgium — Her visit to Lille—Mother Mary of the Angels' letter—The curé of St. Waudru—Mother Pelletier's wisdom in her advice to her daughters—Mgr. Montault's last illness—His affection for the Good Shepherd—Mother Pelletier's gratitude.

Good works in the Catholic Church are like flowers that shed abroad a pleasant perfume, and make all wish to possess them. A wish also to possess houses of the Good Shepherd was the result, among Belgian Catholics, of the excellent fruits produced in the convent at Lille from the time of foundation. A visit paid there by M. André Descamps, senior priest at St. Waudru's in Mons, induced him to form a plan for bringing the Good Shepherd to his own town; and obtaining the Bishop of Tournai's authorisation, he wrote to Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, who (as usual with her on such occasions), disregarding both distance and the limits of her own strength, set out for Mons.

On the way she visited the convent at Lille (which, under Mother Mary of the Angels Levoyer, had grown up into a model monastery), and was joyfully received there by the religious and those

under their charge. In the following letter, from Mother Mary of the Angels to her brother, Superior of the college at Combrée in Anjou, we see what this visit was like, and scarcely know which to admire most; the filial joy of the daughters or the tenderness of the Mother:

"LILLE, 15*th May*, 1839.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—We have just experienced, in a very special manner, the sweetness of holy union, in a visit from our good Mother General, in which the ties of charity that bind us to our dear congregation have been drawn closer than ever. On the 3rd May I had the happiness of welcoming her who received me into holy religion. My joy was indeed great! I had 120 children to present to her—penitents and preservation class; they stood in a double row awaiting impatiently the dear Mother's arrival, to receive her blessing. A curious thing happened while we stood waiting for her: a kind of dove alighted in the midst of us and rested there. Our Mother had with her one of our sisters and our chaplain, M. Mainguy. Nothing would have been wanting to complete my happiness if only you had been in that holy company. . . .

"You will be surprised to hear, dear brother, that I have left France. I had the happiness of coming to Belgium with our Mother General. She was obliged to come to this country about a foundation, for which application had been made to me,

but connected with which were certain difficulties that only our Mother could settle.

"We saw the Bishop of Tournai and his beautiful cathedral, which is remarkable for its antiquity, and which, when I saw, caused me to exclaim, 'Here is something worthy of the Divine Majesty!'

"St. Waudru's Church at Mons is also very beautiful. I confess that this little journey has done me a great deal of good. When our good Mother first saw me, she thought me so much altered that the tears came into her eyes. But I am better now, thanks also to the enlargement of our garden, which our Mother obtained for us, for we were in want of air before.

"But what pleases me most of all, is that our Mother went away from us much satisfied with her house at Lille. She said she found a good spirit here; it is thanks to the care she takes of us, and to our Blessed Lady's protection, our real Superioress. Our Mother says ours is one of the most flourishing houses in the Generalat. It really does increase every day in the number of sheep the Good Shepherd confides to our care, especially in the two preservation classes.—Your very humble Sister,

"SISTER MARY OF THE ANGELS.

"When you see our good Mother, be sure to thank her for all her kindness to us here, and for the good her visit has done us, both with regard to our

exterior and interior life. She is indeed a saint, a heroine of the nineteenth century."

This letter shows with what veneration and affection the religious of the Good Shepherd regarded their Mother Foundress. Her arrival at a foundation was always the signal for general rejoicing; each class composed songs to greet her, and adorned their different sections of the house with wreaths and garlands.

As we have just heard, Sister Mary of the Angels Levoyer went to Mons with Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. The curé of St. Waudru introduced the two religious to the authorities of an hospital who were kindly willing to provide a house for the religious of the Good Shepherd. The reception was altogether very friendly, and Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia felt no hesitation in promising that no effort should be wanting on her part. When she returned to Angers, she received a letter from the Bishop of Tournai himself, begging her to come, and to be full of confidence, and at the same time promising support.

It was to Sister Mary of the Angels that she confided the task of making the final arrangements and taking possession of the house, sending her back to Mons for the purpose. The choice was wise, for, truly humble as was this sister, her gentleness, her pleasing manner, her talent for winning others, were irresistible qualities. At Lille, the prompt extension of the house, its methodical organisation, drew forth

general admiration. Baron Méchin, Préfet du Nord, who had been to visit it a few months before, had been astonished at all that he saw.

The religious sent from Angers to the new foundation arrived in November 1839. They were presented to the Bishop of Tournai by M. Descamps, and afterwards taken to the Convent of the Sacred Heart at Mons, where they were to live until their own house was ready. It was from the Sacred Heart they sent the first news of their arrival in Belgium to Mother Foundress, who, as usual, was anxiously expecting to hear of her daughters.

She looked upon this foundation as taking possession for her Institute of a new and most Catholic country, and upon the four religious sent out to it, as missionaries to be specially encouraged and supported. She wrote them most affectionate letters, sending advice and exhortation to each one, and describing "the beautiful examples of virtue they should give the whole of Belgium." She also told them of the delight with which the Community listened when the Belgian letters were read aloud. This sisterly interest of the religious at Angers in all works of the Institute is constantly mentioned in her correspondence. Letters from sisters sent out as missionaries had, moreover, a stimulating effect on the novices at home, for, as is always the case, the impression made by deeds was deeper than that of words.

The filial confidence with which Mother Foundress was treated by her absent daughters in all their doubts

and difficulties was also a wholesome lesson to the young sisters, it taught them to look to her as their life's counsellor. With the common sense always brought to bear upon her decisions, she adapted her advice to the varying circumstances and situations of her daughters.

On the 6th December 1839, she wrote to the Superioress at Mons: "Receive the lay postulant proposed to you, my very dear daughter. She will be very useful to you, because you will have to follow the customs of the country with all your young people. It would do much mischief if we tried to change the food."

When a foundation was just started, and trials plentiful, the Mother General's letters to her daughters were multiplied, in order to give them confidence as well as advice. "Mons will succeed well," she wrote to the Superioress, 24th March 1840. "You are dear to God and to us because of your trials. Do not be afraid of the Cross. It is your ark of safety. Courage, my child! everything is doing well. You wanted nothing but the Cross, and now you have it. Be calm on Calvary."

On the 2nd of July she wrote to her again: "Your letter of the 29th June has come at last. Alas! we were not mistaken. What a martyrdom you have undergone! I leave everything else to write to you, my beloved daughter, for my very soul is crucified for you in your grief, with all our sisters sick around you. O God! make haste to help us. But

do not let us lose heart, my children: the trial will pass; your troubles will be followed by great consolations."

On the 30th July she wrote again: "Come and make me happy by telling me your health has much improved. Poor child! how you have suffered!"

After these trials and others, the result of their poverty, the religious moved from the house that the hospital authorities had handed over to them, and which was too small, into one better suited to the requirements of their different classes.

In 1842, M. André Descamps, being appointed Vicar-general of the diocese, was succeeded by his brother, M. Gédéon Descamps, who, in becoming curé of St. Waudru's Parish, became also the warm friend and benefactor of the Good Shepherd. Starting from this foundation at Mons, Belgium, a country always generous to Catholic works, became one of those where the daughters of Mother Pelletier met with most kindness. Their noble vocation attracted sympathy.

Mgr. Montault, the Bishop of Angers, had, as will be remembered, supported Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia in her work with a fatherly devotion, regarding the Good Shepherd, as he himself said, "as one of the glories of his episcopate." The poor and lowly always attracted him, and he was specially drawn to the large classes of penitents and preservation children who had been restored to God through the Institute. He had seen the work in its beginning, had helped it through

difficulties, stood by it in days of trial, and now he saw it before him, strong, great, and widespread.

The Novitiate contained 130 novices, hope of a more and more prosperous future, directed by Mother Foundress, who reserved to herself the task of their instruction. Six of the most experienced religious helped her in superintending the Novitiate; but she made a point of herself explaining the rule, and imparting that zeal for the conversion of sinners which is the true spirit of the Order, for she knew that the sound method of fortifying a Community is to establish it in the Founder's spirit, to make the perpetual living presence of that spirit the very atmosphere which sustains its life. On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, at Chapter, she made a vow to our Blessed Lady, in order to obtain the true spirit and vocation of the Good Shepherd for her novices, to recite the *Stabat* daily for ten years. Nothing occupied her mind so much as this forming of her daughters in the spirit of their vocation. In all her instructions, she constantly exhorted them to remember the purpose of their work, viz., the conversion of sinners.

The following is one of her instructions in this year (1839):

"The good religious to whom we lately had the honour of showing hospitality for a few days, said, when leaving the house, 'Oh, what are we, compared to religious of the Good Shepherd!' Now, do you suppose it was the graces or pretty manners of some

of our novices which made them speak in that way? Oh, certainly not. What filled them with admiration was the order, the regularity of our offices, the zeal every one showed for the welfare of our poor children, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the devotedness they remarked in the mistresses of the classes; nothing but all this. People think you are saints, every one of you, my dear daughters; that is the reason why they want you everywhere, and that missionaries and other zealous persons ask for you. Well, you must take care not to deceive those who trust you. I mean, you must be saints in reality. Go forward, then; advance in the career of perfection with redoubled speed.

"The novices of St. Chantal became, in only a few months, such perfect religious that she could do whatever she liked with them. Would that I could have, if only for one year, her spirit of holiness, to form quickly in the Novitiate all the mistresses of the classes, superioresses, and foundresses we need so much; for we have works on hand which languish and need help. A religious of the Good Shepherd must be content to be in the foundations, happy to be in the classes, and must never say, 'I would rather be at Angers; I cannot get accustomed to this place;' nor, 'Some other office would suit me better.' Would such an one be truly religious? She would not even be a Christian; for has not every Christian an obligation laid upon him to bear contradiction, and to make some sacrifices? How many people are there not in the world who bear contradictions from morn

till eve, and submit silently to their fate! How, then, can religious complain of things that are disagreeable to them—religious who ought to be forming themselves in love of the Cross, which is so necessary to their perfection? It may well be believed that if love of the Cross, desire for suffering, self-denial, were wanting in the Institute, it would be on the point of perishing.

"Let us suppose that, yielding to your desires, I let myself be persuaded into leaving it to you to choose the place you would like best to go to, or the office most in conformity with your tastes; rest assured you would be as miserable as possible: miserable in this world, because tormented with remorse; miserable hereafter, because the judgments of God would press with all their weight upon you.

"You grieve when the time comes for you to leave the Mother House; you even shed many tears, because you keenly feel separation from all that is dearest to you in this world. These are the natural feelings of your grateful hearts. I do not blame them. On the contrary, I like to see this tender, religious affection in you, and am persuaded that, so long as leaving the Mother House causes pain, the Institute will live and flourish.

"Remember always that our congregation was founded by love of souls only, and that you will sustain it only by that same love. Do you know the name I give to the love we ought to have for souls? I call it the *love of appreciation*. The saints loved

souls, because the price paid for them is the Blood of our Lord. The saints value the soul of any poor ragged child, full of defects and faults; or the soul of every sinful man or woman, because God loves it, and our Lord shed His Blood to redeem it. These were the thoughts that moved St. Xavier when he went out to conquer souls. A religious who should be afraid of pain or difficulty, who should say, 'I have an attraction to this or that,' thinking but of her own satisfaction—ah! that religious would not have the true love of souls in her heart.

"Good God! what are we doing in the world? Why are we in it at all if it be not that we may contribute to the salvation of our brethren? Let us unite ourselves to our Lord in the most Holy Sacrament. In It He is continually annihilating Himself, and offers Himself a Victim to His Eternal Father in reparation for the insults, the crimes of lost souls who refuse to understand that they are heaping misery on themselves by their iniquities. Yet Jesus still loves them, and perpetually shows to His Father the wounds with which He consented to be covered for their salvation. Those souls belong to Him; they are His by so many titles, and it is His will that they all should be saved, all belong to Him. He came into the world that He might redeem and save them, and the Heavens marvelled when they beheld the accomplishment of this incomprehensible mystery of love, that mystery to which, so to speak, each Person of the Blessed Trinity contributes a par-

ticular share. The Eternal Father gives what is dearest to Him, His own Son, and, that the mission of love towards creatures may be accomplished, He sends as a messenger the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin, who is already filled with grace and the most precious gifts of Heaven, as the future Mother of God. The celestial ambassador flies, cleaving his way through the clouds, and comes to announce to this privileged creature God's designs, and the decrees of His infinite mercy to mankind. The Holy Spirit waits but for the consent of that purest of virgins that He may come upon her and cover her with His strength, and now such miracles are accomplished that our weak intelligence will never fathom them. And for whom did the Lord do all these things? Perhaps for chosen souls, His friends? Oh no! my dear daughters; all these things were done entirely for erring souls who had departed from the right road and lost themselves. See, see how God loves!

"And we, shall we do nothing for Him? Shall we render Him nothing in return? Oh yes! We will bring back to Him some of those souls so dear to His Heart. And at the hour of our death, that supreme moment when we are about to appear before Him who should be the one only object of our love, at that moment, I say, those souls, the souls we shall have sent on before us to possess Heaven, will come and lay at our feet their palm branches and their crowns, recognising in us the

instruments God deigned to use to win them back to His love. What will then be our joy? What, O my God, will be that festal day? What the jubilation of Heaven when the religious of the Good Shepherd enter it in triumph?

"I must conclude here, my dear daughters, for the subject now touched upon would offer so much to say that I might go on speaking till the day after to-morrow if I let myself do so. Love your dear penitents more and more, cherish your priceless vocation, for which you should be full of gratitude to the ineffable goodness of our God.

"Whether your occupation be writing, sewing, in the kitchen, or no matter what, remember always that you ought to have the intention of working for the salvation of souls. You know what was the mission on earth of the Son of God, and think that you have in some sort the privilege of a like vocation; you ought to feel this an honour. Let this thought of the noble enterprise entrusted to you give you the high spirit worthy of it. Present to our Divine Lord the souls that cost Him His Life, His Blood; offer them to Him as the pledge of our love, as a title to the eternal reward He prepares for us."

The spiritual prosperity of the Good Shepherd was the joy of Mgr. Montault's old age. When he could no longer visit his dear daughters as often as he wished, on account of his infirmities, their chaplain, M. Mainguy, used to take him minutely detailed reports from Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, of all the

joys and sorrows of the Community. One day M. Mainguy found him in his room trying to walk. "Please tell my daughters of the Good Shepherd," said the holy octogenarian, "that I was trying my strength on purpose to go and see them." A week later he sent word to say he was coming, and when the time arrived, the religious assembled at the entrance of the enclosure to meet him. He could go no farther, and an armchair was brought for him. He gave a touching exhortation, at the close of which he said, "I feel that my course is nearly run; I shall soon reach the term of my life. When you hear, my dear daughters, that the poor Bishop of Angers is in his last agony, pray for him, I beseech you, to the Sovereign Judge that He may deign to show him mercy."

The sound of his voice was almost inaudible; but he gave the Community his blessing, and detained the Mother General to ask her about every detail with regard to the various foundations. He listened to all she told him, then exclaimed, "This work is truly of God; I see it more than I ever did. I esteem myself happy in having been chosen by God to help in establishing it."

It was his last visit. He was eighty-five years old, and a few days later he lay upon his death-bed. The day before his death he signed his name for the last time to ratify the rule for the penitents. Then speaking to the Abbé Mainguy, who stood near him, he said, "When the bell is rung for my

agony, let the Blessed Sacrament be exposed at the Good Shepherd, and let all the Community offer their prayers for me, that they may obtain favourable judgment for my soul from the Divine Mercy." Shortly before he died, on the 29th July 1839, he commended his dear house of the Good Shepherd to M. Régnier, his Vicar-General, giving it thus almost his last words as well as his last signature.

His death was deeply mourned by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. She had a service for the repose of his soul celebrated in the convent chapel, and asked for prayers and communions in every house of the Order. She perpetually reminded her sisters of the gratitude they owed him as the great benefactor and second founder of the Institute. She kept his portrait as a precious treasure which he had sent her in 1837, saying that he had done so that his "dear daughters might have the kindness to think of him in their fervent prayers."

Every gift to her Institute touched her sensitive nature, and especially those from superiors. The Bishop's visits to the Good Shepherd after he had reached the advanced age of eighty-five used to move her to tears.

In this same spirit, not knowing how otherwise to give expression to her gratitude towards the Holy Father for his unfailing kindness to the Good Shepherd, she sent him, at the close of 1839, a basket of artificial flowers, made at the Mother House of Angers, with a note reporting the growth of the

Generalat and its prosperous state. His Holiness deigned to let the Mother General know that he had been touched by this filial attention, and this condescending kindness on his part produced an increase of zeal and piety throughout the Community.

CHAPTER XXV

MOTHER PELLETIER'S CHARITY TO HER DAUGHTERS

1840

Mother Pelletier mourns the death of her daughters—Illness—Mgr. Paysant—Death of Sister Mary of St. Anselm Debrais—Allocution to the Community.

With the joys experienced by the Superioress of a prosperous community, God mingles griefs great in proportion to the sensitiveness of her soul. She is a mother, and sorrowfully she sees her daughters die around her, often the most useful among them, nearly always the dearest, for the measure of love is best realised when the loved ones are lost. Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia felt every pain her daughters suffered, and mourned before God for the loss of each one.

In 1840, Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia Duverger died, a religious on whom the Mother General had built great hopes. In spite of her youth, she had been made Surveillante of the Novitiate. She was very humble, full of zeal, and very eager to save souls. It was her ardent desire to help in founding the house in Rome, and she was learning Italian for that purpose. When she received the last Sacra-

ments she offered her life to our Lord for the prosperity of this foundation.

We have before noticed Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's fervent belief in the Communion of Saints. She had taught her daughters always to offer all their sacrifices and labours for the spiritual well-being of particular works; and often some fervent soul among them would offer life itself for a foundation specially dear to their Mother's heart. To these generous sacrifices, inspired by the purest faith, she used to think she owed the success of the most important works she undertook for the salvation of souls.

In the beginning of 1840, she felt it was time to make a general visitation of all her foundations. M. Régnier, Vicar-Capitular, provided the necessary permissions for leaving the enclosure; and, accompanied by two other religious, Mother Pelletier started on her journey, only, however, to reach Auxerre, where she became so ill that she was unable to proceed. This was a trial to which, however, she calmly submitted, recognising in it that God had overruled her designs for some greater good. Nor was the shortened journey fruitless, for in a long conversation held with the Archbishop of Sens and the Bishop-elect of Puy, she learned that, in Paris, the Queen who was very favourable to the Institute, was anxious to recommend it to the Archbishop, and obtain a foundation for Paris.

A letter the Mother wrote to Sister-Assistant at Angers shows her spiritual way of interpreting dis-

appointments. "The Divine Will delays me on the way: we must adore it and submit. I am in the most profound peace, because I have done all I could. Be comforted, my dear daughters, even if we do not continue our journey, it was none the less necessary and ordained by God."

While she was thus returning in ill-health to her daughters at the Good Shepherd, the new Bishop of Angers, Mgr. Paysant was making his formal entry to his episcopal town. She had looked forward with some apprehension to his arrival, for he had previously been Superior of the Refuge at Caen, and it seemed natural that he might object to the Generalat. He soon, however, reassured her. When he came to the Good Shepherd, she received him with her usual dignified simplicity, and in that first visit he showed his warm interest in the Community, telling the religious he thought the Generalat an institution required by the age. He also appointed M. Régnier Superior, and promised to assist personally at some ceremonies of clothing and profession which were about to take place.

Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, in her joy at finding in Mgr. Montault's successor as in himself the same kindness and affection, wrote thus to M. Neuville. The following letter is the good old man's answer:

"*March 17th*, 1840.

"The Bishop's face had already prepossessed me in his favour, but how much pleasure your letter gives

me. I thank you very much for writing so promptly to tell me of his visit. Your letter touched me much, but if you would kindly show your gratitude in a manner more useful to my poor soul, it would be by reserving its expression for those sweet moments when you sit at Mary's feet and behold her beauty. Do not talk to me any more about *my sacrifices*. They are an old story now, and, thanks to my bad memory, and to the grace of God, I might perhaps forget all about them."

But this saintly man, whose desire it was to forget the very things nature finds it agreeable to bear in mind, his own good deeds, unceasingly followed with affectionate attention the smallest incidents in the history of the Good Shepherd, dear to him for the Mother General's sake ever since the time of its foundation.

Ten days after her happy letter, another, containing sad news, reached him. One of her daughters, upon whom she had grounded many hopes, had died at the age of twenty-six, in the odour of sanctity, by name Sister Mary of St. Anselm Debrais. She came from Mans, and had acquired such a reputation for virtue in the Community since her profession, that the religious kept her heart after her death, and had it laid under their cloister near St. Radegonde's Chapel, where they surrounded it with lilies and violets.

Many were the tears shed by the Mother Foundress for this child of her predilection. "Oh, my God,"

she wrote to the Superioress at Poitiers, "I can hardly see what I write, my tears fall on my paper: I have just seen a religious of incomparable holiness breathe forth her last sigh; Sister Mary of St. Anselm is no more! She is at rest in the bosom of God. Our sweet saintly Sister, she who so tenderly loved you, is gone! Oh my daughter, I feel, I believe she is in heaven! I leave our Sisters to tell you the rest. Tears prevent my writing, but my heart speaks to you."

The good Mother, accustomed always to live by faith in the supernatural world, and thoroughly convinced of this Sister's holiness, so relied upon her obedience that when the doctor who was to remove the heart from the body found the arms crossed on the breast, too stiff to separate, she addressed to her the following order, as if she were still alive: "My dear Sister, you have always been so obedient; in the spirit of Obedience now permit us to do what we wish." At her voice the religious, obedient even in death, opened out her arms. This fact, preserved by Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's daughters in their annals, is handed on from one generation to another to the praise of the venerable Foundress's faith, God having, as it were, given her authority over death.

A soul of commoner mould might have been crushed by the constantly repeated blows that fell upon so sensitive a heart; but Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia, whilst bearing about a continual remembrance of her departed daughters, thinking always of them as still

part of the Community, and working for it in heaven, kept up her courage by her constant activity and unceasing labour. In the example left by those who had gone before, she looked for encouragement for herself and her Community. She spoke of the religious life of Sister Mary of St. Anselm Debrais to the Community, on the 29th March 1840, in the following edifying terms, and set before them the spiritual profit all should draw from her example:

"Does it not seem, my dear daughters, as if we were still everywhere looking for our dear Sister Mary of St. Anselm? We do not become in the least accustomed to the void she has left. But let us contemplate her in heaven, where she prays for the Community and for each of us, and our grief will be softened by her happiness.

"Mary has drawn her to herself, for she was here the faithful reflection of her virtues, she was full of God. What a solid judgment! What wisdom! What spiritual riches her beautiful soul contained! We always compared her to St. Aloysius Gonzaga. There were the same purity, angelic piety, and entire confidence in God.

"Our regretted Sister was everywhere a model. In the home of her birth, her happy natural disposition made her the joy and comfort of her parents. Her brothers and sisters surrounded her with their love. Severe to herself and indulgent to every one else, she never missed an opportunity of being useful or kind. When there were visits to be paid, or

evening parties to be attended, she always made her sisters go in her place, excusing herself as having no conversation, and saying she found it far more amusing to stay at home and do their embroidery for them. By these and other little sacrifices in things dear to the young, she prepared the way for her high vocation. When the time came for her to enter religion, she was one day talking to her director, M. Régnier, of her attraction to our holy Congregation, and, with admirable humility, said to him, 'I am so wicked, perhaps my presence will defile the house of God.'

(Angel of God, you were to make that house beautiful.)

"'I was not thinking of that,' M. Régnier answered; 'I was thinking of your mother, of her sorrow, and of her need of your care.'

"'God will give me grace to overcome the obstacles,' she replied.

"When M. Régnier introduced her to us he said, 'She is a saint; hers is a soul of purest gold. God is giving the Congregation a precious gift.'

"In religion she was the living rule. One had only to look at our dear Sister Mary of St. Anselm to know what one ought to do. She was highly educated: she knew Latin; English was as familiar to her as French; she could also draw; but when her mother asked her how she was employed at the Good Shepherd, she answered, with her habitual sweetness, 'I am a burden to the Community, but

our Sisters are so kind that they never make me feel it.' 'Yet at home,' said her mother, 'you were so useful and so necessary.' 'Ah, dear mother, you only thought that because you were so good.'

"Humility and obedience seemed to be the life of her soul. Her union with God made her perceive her own slightest imperfections: her whole behaviour was admirably regular and exact. She has carried with her into the presence of God, we doubt not, her vows pure and intact. She was not one of those plants which dry up beneath the scorching blast of pride. She was a flower opened out continually to receive the dews of morning, and to acquire fresh virtue and beauty every day. Like ships coming from far-off islands, bearing rich cargo, her soul was rich in virtues. Pure disinterested charity had taught her to love all alike. She sought out simple souls to teach and amuse them; she liked to be with those inclined to melancholy, 'because,' said she, 'her own mind had the same turn;' young novices she thought of use to her, because they made her gay. In spite of her constant pain and those interior sorrows to which it pleased God to subject her, she was always serene.

"This beautiful life was fitly crowned by a beautiful death. In her last illness her goodness shone with renewed brilliance. She was always cheerful, always patient, and continually sighing for the moment when she might leave this earth. When she was in her last agony, she doubted whether it were right to ask

for something to relieve her during the great silence; she even reproached herself with having shown she was thirsty. When she was dying, she still continued to offer her sufferings for the works of the Congregation, being passionately devoted to it: she also offered them for all our intentions. When we suggested to her to ask God to cure her, fearing to disobey us, but feeling she desired only heaven, she said: 'If you wish it, dear Mother, if our Sisters wish it: but how much it costs me!' With her dying lips she still murmured, 'It is very sweet to die.' Presently I came near her bed, and said to her, 'My child, we will go into the House of the Lord.' 'Oh yes, dear Mother!' she said, with a happy look, and then died. The remembrance of this humble religious will always live among us.

"As you desired, my dear daughters, we have had her heart removed. It will be placed in a glass urn in a niche in our cloisters, and above it these words shall be inscribed: '*He who humbleth himself shall be exalted.*' When you see it you will excite yourselves to follow that beautiful example, and particularly you will say to yourselves, 'Our dear and deeply regretted Sister Mary of St. Anselm never broke silence when she went about the monastery.'

"Thus the perfume of her virtues will continue to purify our beloved monastery, and the generations to come will learn how virgins blossom in the garden of the Spouse."

CHAPTER XXVI

FOUNDATIONS AT NAMUR AND LA LAURETANA

Foundation at Namur — Letter from Mother Pelletier — Mother St. Clare—Confidence shown towards her by Mother Pelletier — Mother Pelletier's power of consoling her daughters — Foundation of La Lauretana — Spirit of poverty — Religious consolations.

Good work, done simply in a spirit of devotedness, without thought of self, is a living sermon to generous souls. Belgium, in the present century the refuge of religious communities, in past ages the cradle of great Catholic charities, could not possibly be insensible to the grand work carried on by Mother Pelletier's daughters at their first foundation.

Two priests who came from Namur to see and study the house at Mons, went back delighted with the devotedness of the religious and with the perfection of their method of organisation, and determined to have the Good Shepherd at Namur. They sent an account of their visit to Mgr. Dehesselle, who encouraged their idea and gave leave for an appeal to public charity. The smallness of the house assigned to the religious at Mons, and its bad condition, had struck the priests painfully, and they

were anxious to provide better quarters at Namur. Meantime they corresponded with the Mother Foundress, and obtained her consent. She chose for Superioress Mother Mary of St. Clare Godelier, Assistant at Avignon, and announced the nomination in the following words:

"I said, 'Behold, I come.'

"My very dear daughter, it is God who calls you, by the voice of obedience. Come at His Divine Will. You are nominated local Superioress of one of our dear monasteries. Come first to Angers, my beloved Sister. May the Spirit of God and holy obedience lead you in all your ways. Do everything with great prudence. We shall all pray for you.

"Your attached Mother,

"MARY OF ST EUPHRASIA."

The words that head the letter could not be more appropriate. It is God whom the religious ought to hear in the voice of her Superior, and there should then be no shadow of hesitation. Wherever it may call, there the religious should follow, not even waiting to know the name of her future abode. But the Mother gives her orders gently, and the prayers of the Community are promised.

Towards the close of April, a little band of religious left for Belgium, and to this promptitude, as the event showed, the foundation owed its existence, for, as in other instances, after the first outburst, the ardour of benefactors cooled, and their goodwill slackened.

The religious were received at the Carmelite convent, and stayed there until after the diocesan synod had taken place, when Mgr. Dehesselle established them as a community in their own house, in the Rue du Seminaire. Their joy in this event was soon damped, however, by the death of Sister Mary of St. Bartholomew Gouin, whom God took to Himself as the first-fruits of the work. Before her death she foretold to her remaining Sisters that many sheep would enter their fold, and many sinners be converted.

Mgr. Dehesselle's kindness was unvarying. He gave the Sisters as chaplain Canon Wilmet, Professor of Canon Law at the Great Seminary, and then they were able always to have our dear Lord in their little Oratory. His Divine blessing spread over the house, which, at the close of the year, contained no fewer than fifty penitents. Its prosperity was largely due to the Superioress, who was deeply imbued with the spirit of Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia. She was both very devoted and very simple, and, whether she ruled or obeyed, showed always the same supernatural sweetness and equality of temper. By birth a daughter of La Vendée, beneath that calm exterior, so much appreciated in northern lands, there was an interior ardour for good works, which was ever increasing. It was very remarkably shown at a time when cholera crowded her house with orphans. She was widely known all over Belgium, and, though separated from the world by her enclosure,

possessed much influence in Namur and the neighbouring cities.

Mother St. Clare was the resource that never failed when no other home could be found to receive a young girl. It was through her influence that the Good Shepherd houses at Louvain and Schaerbeck, not far from Brussels, were founded.

When the time came at last for her to return to Angers to end her days, she very regretfully left Belgium, the scene of her life's work, and Namur, the town where cathedral canons, religious of every order, and seculars honoured her with mingled admiration and reverence. Her sisters looked upon her as a living portrait of the virtues of their Foundress, whom she had always loved tenderly, and found in her the same loving piety towards our Lord, sweetness towards others, and utter forgetfulness of self.

When two devoted persons like the Mother Foundress and Mother St. Clare understand one another, great things are possible to them. On the one side, gentle authority; on the other, eager obedience, united in doing the work of God, they give one another the mutual encouragement of example. When a soul like Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia's, filled with zeal, consents to let another soul, pure and open, like that of Mother St. Clare, gaze into its depths, there results from this spiritual intercourse a capability of work which is almost miraculous, and which is ever growing like the supernatural charity which is its source.

The following are some of the beautiful letters in which the Mother General opened her heart to this Sister:

"*4th April* 1841.

"Mary stood at the foot of the Cross."

"My good and indulgent daughter, I can well imagine our long silence has kept you at the foot of the Cross with Mary, our holy Mother. Oh no, dearest child, I was neither vexed nor indifferent, but simply overwhelmed with work. I knew too that Namur was going on well, so I paid attention rather to other houses, which I knew to be in a trembling or tottering condition. Your last letter was a great comfort to me. The Lord has great designs for this dear colony, and I bless it with all my heart. Our Sisters, to whom you are all very dear, send you their love and their thanks for the good news. Your church is begun; you are going on well, my children; take courage again and again; stir yourselves up by being very fervent and by holy regularity. Love one another with a tender charity. Take care of your penitents and your children, both in things spiritual and temporal. Pray for our dear Institute; pray too for London and Paris; have a novena made for both these great foundations to our Lady of Pity. Oh, how gladly would I know both were safe! There is no kind of cross we have not experienced for those two dear foundations. But should they succeed, a million souls will be the conquest. This is the very reason the powers of darkness are provoked. It would

take pages to give you an account of all the difficulties our Sisters have had to contend with."

Thus did Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia love to pour herself out to her daughters, and especially to those among them who, like Mother St. Clare, could more deeply enter into her ideas, had laboured side by side with her from the beginning in extending the Institute, and who were carrying forth to distant places the fruits which the Good Shepherd gathered from the Generalat. It fortified her to feel that all her daughters, however far away, sympathised with her in every joy, every fear, and prayed with her for all the foundations.

Not that her own cares or solicitude for the Generalat and foundations so absorbed her mind that she used her letters as a mere means for self-relief, pouring out her sorrows and joys—her own sorrows, her own joys. On the contrary, she possessed the art of entering into every one else's cares, of writing to each one of her daughters of their own particular anxieties, of saying the right word to brace up their courage in present difficulty, and of praising them in success. In one word, her heart was with them so naturally, that to whoever amongst them she chanced to be writing, the cares, the joys of that particular sister's office and ministry were identified with her own thoughts and heart.

Nor was this art of correspondence a mere artifice: it came from her very heart; it was perfectly natural.

On the 19th May 1844, she wrote to Mother St. Clare:

"My good loving Daughter,—We bless God for the great success of the work at Namur. No monastery has ever shown more visibly the effects of the Divine Mercy and our Blessed Lady's protection. The plan for your church is delightful. I cannot express to you, my beloved Sister, the consolation I experience with regard to God's designs for us in Belgium. I think the Institute will spread everywhere. Let us then indeed be saints, my dear Sisters, and love God better than ourselves. The letters Sister Mary of the Guardian Angels (Assistant-Mistress of Penitents) writes are very pleasing to us! She tells us about her dear flock, the object of my solicitude. I bless them all and embrace their Shepherdess. The good accounts of our dear Sisters make the burden of our work easier to bear. If you knew how I love them! My one consolation on earth is to see our dear Sisters live the life of true religious.

"I feel so grateful to the Bishop of Namur, that I could have no greater pain than to refuse the prison work he proposes. Had you but been a little stronger numerically, my poor children, I should have allowed three of you to go and take possession of that little house, for God, for the Bishop, and for dear Mme. Vinet, whom I tenderly love and respect."

The Mother General bestowed so much attention

upon Namur that one might almost believe she had thought of it exclusively, but upon each house of the Institute she poured forth the undivided affection of her whole heart.

She thought of Rome as the Holy City whence had come the solemn ratification of the Generalat, and where the Pope himself, Gregory XVI., had established a community of her daughters. It was, therefore, with extreme joy that she welcomed a request for a second foundation there. The house of the Lauretana, called by that name because the church was dedicated to Our Lady of Loretto, had been given, in 1818, by Leo XII. to a society of Roman ladies (known as the Loretto Union) for the reception of penitents. The young women received were governed by pious seculars, but in 1840 the ladies of the society petitioned his Holiness, Gregory XVI., to sanction the transfer of the establishment to religious of the Good Shepherd of Angers. In compliance with the request, the Sovereign Pontiff, for the second time, summoned a detachment of the Congregation to Rome. The Superioress appointed by the Mother General was a religious who had made her vows in Rome, Sister Mary of St. Celestine Husson. When she arrived, she found an altar and picture in the Church of Our Lady of Loretto, which had been placed there by the Ven. Father Angiolo Paulo, discalced Carmelite, and various ex-votos attesting to favours obtained.

Three religious from Angers began the foundation, sent forth by their Mother as missionaries, in virtue

of holy Obedience. They took no money with them, but were full of zeal and trusted that Divine Providence which has never failed the Congregation. The first religious of Namur had begun their work with only forty-four francs in their common purse. The religious of the Lauretana began theirs with equal confidence in God's Providence, and, poor as they were, could never make up their minds to refuse any penitent who sought admission. This disposition of theirs became the cause of much pain to them, for the Roman lady patronesses by no means understood how a monastery could exist without revenues, and they attempted to thwart the enthusiasm of the religious, thereby creating for them a daily renewed cross.

The position of the monastery, situated in a street leading to St. John Lateran, gave spiritual advantages which were no small compensation for annoyances from other sources. The Sisters saw the Pope pass on his way to the Lateran, surrounded by a brilliant company in attendance; they received his blessings, beseeching our Divine Lord meantime to extend the grace received to their Mother-General and all her family. Whatever edifying news reached them, knowing Rome to be the frequent object of their Mother's thought, they passed on to her. Sometimes they had beautiful ceremonies in their own chapel of which to tell her, ceremonies in honour of Our Lady of the Lauretana, arranged by Mgr. Frattini, Superior of the house. Upon these occasions, the veil which generally covered the holy picture placed in the church by Father Angiolo Paulo

was removed; the chapel was magnificently decorated; musicians from Santa Maria Maggiore came to sing; and all the morning, Mass after Mass was said by priests who came to the chapel for that purpose.

These stations, which are a Roman devotion kept up on the patronal feasts of certain sanctuaries, greatly delighted the Community when it was the turn of their chapel, and their joy found an echo at Angers. They loved, too, to report to their Mother every favour obtained from Our Lady of Loretto, and to tell her of the progress made by their house under her holy protection.

They adopted the pious custom of choosing the feast days of Our Lady on which to make any important change, that she might thus become responsible for every detail of their work in her sanctuary.

They often received visits from illustrious people. Princess Doria, one of their benefactresses, took under her special protection the Preservation class. Princess Bracciano was also a devoted friend to the Institute. Princes of the Church likewise visited them, Cardinal Patrizi among the number, who, as their Cardinal Protector, became their adviser in difficulties, and cheered them with encouraging words. Sometimes priests came from Anjou with news of the Mother House, and, better still, of the revered Superioress.

Soon after their arrival, a canon from Angers came, the Abbé Mercier, who talked much to them of their Mother's great work all over France. Another visitor was Mme. de Lamartine, who spoke with warm interest of the monastery in Paris. In fact, Lauretana

became naturally a sort of stage where every pilgrim who loved the Good Shepherd halted on his way to St. John Lateran.

But dearest of all pilgrims was Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia herself, when, to the joy and profit of her daughters, she paid a second visit to Rome in 1843. She gave permission for the enlargement of the house, to enable them to receive some orphans whom Princess Doria was supporting in a private house. The Pope, Gregory XVI., cordially approved the undertaking, and contributed 500 crowns (2500 francs) towards its support, and when the monastery, enlarged and beautiful, was ready for the work, the religious lost no time in beginning it. They have still a silver ciborium the Mother General gave them as a souvenir of her visit, and which they keep as a treasure.

Her visits to her foundations were always marked by a fresh impetus of zeal among the religious, and all strove more and more to reach the ideal sketched out by the Venerable Father Eudes, and which was so perfectly carried out by the most illustrious of his daughters of the nineteenth century, namely, by the servant of God herself.

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